



eCOMMONS

Loyola University Chicago
Loyola eCommons

Dissertations

Theses and Dissertations

2012

Reification and the Closed Mind

Mark D. Rockwell
Loyola University Chicago

Recommended Citation

Rockwell, Mark D., "Reification and the Closed Mind" (2012). *Dissertations*. Paper 386.
http://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_diss/386

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses and Dissertations at Loyola eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Loyola eCommons. For more information, please contact ecommons@luc.edu.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/).
Copyright © 2012 Mark D. Rockwell

LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

REIFICATION AND THE CLOSED MIND

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PROGRAM IN CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL POLICY STUDIES

BY
MARK ROCKWELL
CHICAGO, IL
DECEMBER 2012

Copyright by Mark Rockwell, 2012
All rights reserved.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank all of those who contributed to and made this project realizable. To list all those who have influenced me and had some effect in this end would indeed be a long list. It will have to suffice to mention a few. I will begin with my family, that most foundational element in my life that has provided constant and critical support. My wife Heidi, a bastion of love, patience and fortitude the likes of which I find a loss in understanding her deep reservoir. My children, Mariana and Elise who will find it hard to understand what it is like having a father who is not working on his dissertation.

I would like to also thank the Education Department of Loyola University Chicago, particularly the guidance and direction of Dr. Roemer for the final phase that provided impetus for completion. Additionally Dr. Wren of the Philosophy Department who gave me an opportunity to gain teaching experience that provided much insight into my thesis.

Finally I would like to acknowledge The University library systems, my second home where I worked fulltime while pursuing my studies and research. The staff and support of those people were singular to my success. Particularly I wish to thank Gino Angelini, Sherri Rollins and Tracy Ruppman for their support and friendship.

With all your science - can you tell how it is, and whence it is, that light comes into the
soul?

Henry David Thoreau

Open-mindedness is a quality which will always exist where desire for knowledge is
genuine.

Bertrand Russell

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
CHAPTER ONE: THE PROBLEM OF OPENNESS	1
CHAPTER TWO: REIFICATION AND CLOSEDNESS	31
Reification	32
The Tradition	37
CHAPTER THREE: KANT AND THE HUMAN PREDISPOSITION TOWARDS METAPHYSICS AND THE LIMITS OF REASON	50
Summary	68
CHAPTER FOUR: HEIDEGGER	73
Implications of Dasein's type of being	82
Dasein's World	86
Concerning Reification	91
CHAPTER FIVE: REVISITING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OPENNESS AND CLOSEDNESS	104
Modes of Reification	110
Naïve or direct Realism	110
Dogmatism	115
Operationalism	116
Enlightenment Positivism	119
Examples of Reification in the World	122
Content Reification	126
Reification of Method	131
Marx's Contribution	132
Human Reification	137
Institutional Reification	139
Ideological Reification	145
Concluding Remarks	148
BIBLIOGRAPHY	153
VITA	158

CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM OF OPENNESS

What does it mean to have an open mind? Is it desirable? Are we therefore to avoid its opposite, a closed mind? Is the metaphor of open and closed appropriate to understanding how the mind functions? If so, then how is it to be accomplished? How shall we proceed in producing an open mind or avoiding its opposite a closed mind? Can it be too much of a good thing, can one be too open-minded? The terms open and closed are commonly used as if the meanings of the terms were clear and the expectant goods associated with being open preferred.

Perhaps one of the most cogent and clear accounts of the meaning of an open mind is given to us by professional educator William Hare. In his book *Open-mindedness and Education*¹ Hare sets out to explicitly define, explain, and defend a positive view of open-mindedness over and against popularized ambiguities and controversies over the term. Hare argues open-mindedness is essentially attitudinal and necessary for what it means to be educated. In his *In Defense of Open-Mindedness*,² Hare claims that there is pervasive agreement that open mindedness is understood as the ability to consider and revise one's view in light of contrary

¹ William Hare, *Open-Mindedness and Education* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 1979), ix-xi.

² William Hare, *In Defense of Open-Mindedness* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 1980), 3.

evidence.³ Hare adopts and develops this view with the addition of focusing on openness as an issue of disposition. A person with this sort of disposition is one who has an orientation that is open to reflecting and considering the views they already hold over and against other considerations, such as new evidence or differing theories.⁴ Its opposite, a closed mind, has generally been defined as one that has been subject to indoctrination. Indoctrination is likewise dispositional and understood as having rigidly fixed ideas.⁵ As such, an individual that has been indoctrinated is either unable to comprehend his own position with any degree of reflexivity or aspiration towards objectivity. If these individuals encounter new possibilities regarding the position they hold, they are unwilling to change their own views. For Hare, indoctrination is de facto closed mindedness.⁶

Additionally for Hare, commitment to discursive rationality is at the same time a commitment and agreement with open mindedness. Discursive rationality understood in terms of a dialectical development means that one, in order to be open, must be able to understand and willing to revise one's views in light of new material.⁷ This generally may assume that the original position is already a rational account, and evaluating it in light of the new requires the same rational ability; however, open mindedness is not

³ Hare, 3.

⁴ William Hare, *Open-Mindedness and Education* 1979, .9.

⁵ Hare, 27.

⁶ Hare, 8.

⁷ Hare, 12.

equivalent or necessary to being rational. As such, one may dispositionally be open minded while holding views that are irrational in the sense of containing inconsistencies or contradictions. The importance for Hare is that one is open to reviewing and correcting one's own views in light of rationality. On the other hand, being closed minded is a way of being irrational. Being either incapable or unwilling to consider new evidence or claims of reasons is to be irrational.⁸

However Hare admits there is some ambiguity to the exact meaning of open mindedness. He argues that being open minded is understood as a trait and such attempts to establish often remain vague. As such, traits that describe desirable behaviors that are not always a constant state, and even so can be employed more or less better thus making the exact moment of employment difficult to identify. Having a disposition that is open, or being open minded, does not admit of a precision to know whether, when or how much a door is open or it is closed.⁹ The vagueness in the trait is applicable in certain contexts and can be employed more or less by some degree. But Hare thinks this ambiguity is an inherent necessity, and as such makes the concept of open-mindedness difficult to define but likewise useful¹⁰

If one is to understand what it means to have an open or closed mind, then we must consider Hare's account simply because he has distilled the conversation and continues to describe the importance of the concepts and the underlying values that the

⁸ Hare, 13.

⁹ William Hare, In Defense of Open-mindedness, 1980, 6.

¹⁰ William Hare, Open-Mindedness and Education 1979, 15.

issue presupposes. Additionally and in its educational context, Hare addresses the extent of how openness should be normatively applied. This provides us a baseline for understanding the concepts even though there is still some ambiguity in understanding precisely how the moment of openness occurs.¹¹ While Hare's attempt to define and defend the concept is notable, other considerations regarding the ambiguity of the terms openness and closedness and their effect in our educational institutions have arisen.

This particular problem of ambiguity was raised and asserted in Allan Bloom's popular 1987 book titled *The Closing of the American Mind*.¹² Bloom argues that there is a "recent education of openness" that parades itself as virtue of tolerance of all views, a cultural relativism that short circuits a student's ability and desire to make any sound distinctions and one that allows all views to be considered as equal.¹³ He opposes this kind of openness and therefore plays upon the ambiguity of the terms by ironically pointing out that the recent cultural openness is nothing more than a great closing.

The impetus for Bloom's book comes from years of teaching at the collegiate level and observing a notable change of orientation on the part of his students. In his view it had once seemed that students came to the university with the desire to learn what was most valuable and good in life with the objective to pursue and implement that good, but during the years of his professorate Bloom observed a gradual cultural shift towards relativism so that students began to espouse the belief that all values, ideas and truths

¹¹ Hare, 15.

¹² Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987)

¹³ Bloom, 26-27.

have equal merit.¹⁴ According to Bloom what had changed in the university, and hence in culture, was a shift towards a different understanding of truth and values. Whereas it had once been the assumption of the academic tradition that a rational pursuit would show the best way for humans to live, now academia seemed supportive of the idea that there is no best way to live but simply different ways, differing preferences and values. In other words, all approaches have equal merit and the need to tolerate other cultures has become of the highest priority such that reason or good judgment must take a back seat. Bloom asserts that something had indeed changed in our culture and more specifically in the orientation of our higher educational institutions and has resulted in a cultural relativism.¹⁵

For Bloom, this spells trouble. For as he see it, this shift toward value neutrality undermines the ability of the student to reason, which requires making clear distinctions and evaluating those values that are best, an assumption operating within the university system since the time of Socrates and encapsulated in the Enlightenment.¹⁶ In fact, for Bloom, the greatness of the university rests on its goal to expose students to the tradition of questioning ideas and reasoning through their positions so that they might come to know and choose in a more informed way. The very idea of the university in Bloom's mind is that one does not see all view points as equal, but some as better than others, and those that are better are worthy to be chosen and promoted. According to Bloom, such

¹⁴ Bloom, 34.

¹⁵ Bloom, 25.

¹⁶ Bloom, 37.

an educational tradition and its values have provided conditions for and aided the flourishing of American democracy.¹⁷

As Bloom sees it, the causes for this shift towards cultural relativism are multi-nefarious. In three sections Bloom reflects on his experience as seen in his view of students both past and present, a cultural trend that he refers to as American nihilism, and finally his experience and assessment regarding how the university has been affected and hence has changed from its ancient and historical position of holding rationality in the highest regard to a much lesser position.

When Bloom began his teaching career, he thought that the uniqueness of the American student was that they entered the university bright-eyed and eager to learn as if in essence they were a “clean slate”, as opposed to their European counterparts who were steeped in an old tradition.¹⁸ He eventually realized that American students had little cultural moorings, i.e. traditions, from which they might pursue those questions of a qualitative life.¹⁹ He noticed that students he was now observing lacked the values that were easily derived from their own heritage of political history, which created and bolstered the American commitment to freedom and equality.²⁰ Additionally these students also lacked the religious orientation and tradition those earlier generations had brought to their studies.²¹ Bloom concluded that it was essentially these traditions that

¹⁷ Bloom, 142, 251.

¹⁸ Bloom, 48.

¹⁹ Bloom, 54.

²⁰ Bloom, 55.

²¹ Bloom, 56.

had provided a favorable orientation toward reason and critical discrimination among values. According to Bloom, the problem was decay in the transmission of values that stemmed from the average family and paralleled the general decay that he saw in the humanities as well as in the culture at large.²² The lack of literary tradition that had provided America students with a clean slate in his view was now manifesting itself as a lack in specific value orientation. The clean slate looked to be more of an empty slate where students no longer had the heroes of literary history and a tradition that was once inspiring. Instead, the students were notably without such figures, trusting and even extolled by their professors toward their own unique formation rather than looking to cultural icons and models of greatness.²³ They did indeed come with a clean slate but one of their own making; they came to the university ready to create their own set of values and place it among the others.

According to Bloom a lack of cultural literacy was replaced with an infusion and ubiquity of available music. It seemed that these students lacked few moments in their lives where there was not an immediate availability of music. Bloom sees this ability to have music readily available as coinciding with the vacuum of intellectual life. With the lack of the intellectual component, students were led to sensual pursuits and an orientation to nothing more than what is “new and startling”.²⁴ Coupled with this, their parents and family unit, the last bastion of guidance for youth, were to blame for the lack

²² Bloom, 58.

²³ Bloom, 66-67.

²⁴ Bloom, 69.

of instilling foundational moral values.²⁵ The result according to Bloom is that students' orientations have shifted toward a self centeredness that affects all aspects of their relationships.²⁶

Standing at the forefront of the American cultural malaise, as Bloom states in his second section of his book, is Nietzsche's proclamation that our values were groundless with his declaration that God was dead; the romantic ties that once secured our traditions and cultural values no longer existed.²⁷ While Nietzsche had hoped for the coming of the last man – he or those who would bring about a new and creative set of values - He was also concerned as well, as Bloom was, that in this void of values posed potential disaster for the human spirit and this would result in the decay of human inspiration, creativity, and more generally, culture. With Nietzsche came a critique of all values and reason's ability to provide an absolute foundation. Reason accordingly had been the tool that provided one with the ability to claim that some values are better than others; it was a way of assuring which values were good and true.²⁸ Now, as Nietzsche declared, reason was suspect, its sources more human than divine. With the advent of God's death, that creative and moral impetus, conviction was dead. This theme was most prominently seen in the figures of Freud and Weber, who predicted without a grounding community from which values might spring, reason would become merely calculative, leaving individuals

²⁵ Bloom, 76.

²⁶ Bloom, 88.

²⁷ Bloom, 143.

²⁸ Bloom, 39.

empty from pursuits of the facile and indulgent sensuality.²⁹ Additionally, given the leveling of values with the death of God, the state of nature concepts produced by Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau, created a political atmosphere, notably in America, where democracy was understood in terms of egalitarianism. Hence freedom without values seemingly took on a negative role and resulted in the type of person that Rousseau had referred to as the bourgeois, that lack-luster soulless individual who would be directed only by self interest manifested in terms of material pursuits.³⁰

In his third and final section of his book, Bloom reflects on the change the American university has undergone and its relationship with and the effect on culture. Bloom reiterates and traces the intellectual history of the above theme of nihilism beginning with Socrates up to Nietzsche ending in Heidegger. Socrates, according to Bloom, symbolizes the university par excellence.³¹ He is the outsider that calls into question those with pretense to knowledge that they must come to critically reflect and examine their assumptions in order to become more reasonable in order to pursue virtue. This is best demonstrated and made famous in Plato's "Allegory of the Cave."³² As such the university should be understood as founded on this Socratic imperative to know, reason and create competence, contiguous with the ideals of the Enlightenment.³³ As

²⁹ Bloom, 150.

³⁰ Bloom, 157.

³¹ Bloom, 268, 307.

³² Bloom, 256.

³³ Bloom, 256, 298.

such, the ideal for the university was to sit freely outside of the political spectrum, yet set the course and direction of a liberal democracy as seen in the ideals of Plato's Republic.³⁴

However, the university's success is perhaps also its moment of dénouement indicating the difficulty that democratization brings with it.³⁵ Unfortunately the Enlightenment brought Nietzsche's attack against Socratic rationality and translated it as a form of cultural imperialism.³⁶ Accordingly, if one was to take the Nietzsche's notion of historical consciousnesses seriously, it follows that all scholarship and thinking that had presupposed the achievement of objectivity was deluded.³⁷ This had a huge affect on the German university and as Bloom saw it, the impact was to be felt by the rest of western culture. Instead of the enlightened university and the humanities, specifically philosophy, directing the course for society as was the ideal, the humanities were relegated to the side and became departments that studied differing cultures, histories and ideas without the intention of discovering what is good or best in them.³⁸ The lack of guidance in values by the humanities encouraged and promoted the elevation of what was useful and hence the natural science departments came to the forefront, supplanting the humanities. And so, understandably, the sciences brought a lack in the profession to

³⁴ Bloom, 259- 266.

³⁵ Bloom, 261.

³⁶ Bloom, 34,39.

³⁷ Bloom, 307.

³⁸ Bloom, 309.

guide and set the moral compass of the students as well as the nation.³⁹ The results would be foreboding. Bloom indicates that by the time Heidegger comes on the scene in the context of the German university, his *rektoratsrede*⁴⁰ became an address that was simply an admittance that the youth of the country “had already made an irreversible commitment to the future” and the country had seemingly little choice but to follow.⁴¹

Comparably and disturbingly similar, Bloom thought that this is our current crisis in the university and on large in culture. It is more than a crisis of educational specifics such as lack of funding, or poor administration, but a crisis that is on a deeper philosophical level. With Nietzsche and historicism came a cultural relativism that accepted the leveling of all values. Our educational institutions no longer asserted a force in effecting culture to a greater and more virtuous behavior by promoting the best values, earned as it were through rigorous study. Instead our situation results in a parallel between Heidegger’s *rektoratsrede* acknowledging the cultural youth movement of the 1930’s in Germany and the decade of the 1960’s in America.⁴²

One result of Bloom’s articulation is noted in the title and what we have already referred to as the problem of openness. The result of Bloom’s thesis begs the more general problem of openness. In his introduction, Bloom gives us two notions of openness. The first is a positive and more essential openness that invites one to explore

³⁹ Bloom, 356,348-351.

⁴⁰ *Rektoratsrede* translates as the rector’s address. This was Heidegger’s inaugural speech for the acceptance of directorship to the University of Heidelberg in May 1933.

⁴¹ Bloom, 311-312.

⁴² Bloom, 311.

and reason with some of history's greatest thinkers in the university context with the intent to discover what is most valuable in life. According to Bloom, this sense of openness is not simply to become academics, but is meant for us to discover via reason and discriminating judgment what is best by engaging in historical and philosophical literature of the past. For Bloom this conversation with the past was not to be understood as a cultic revival of its former glories such as he thinks some adherence to the Great Books tradition creates.⁴³ Rather it is to learn from the past thinkers who wrestled with those perennial issues so that we discover and understand the excellences we already espouse or would aspire to. In keeping with this Enlightenment ideal, Bloom sees the goal of the university to instill these academic values in the student, and therefore direct and affect the culture at large.

The other kind of openness, a more negative conception, is the entire concern and point of Bloom's book. Americans, culturally and, more specifically, philosophically, have moved towards openness as a political and moral imperative. To be open is to accept all cultures and views as having equal value, with the implication that the philosophical justification that ultimately no such morality or ideology is better than any others. There is no authoritative standard on which to claim cultural superiority and so our democratic ethos is directed to tolerate and treat equal all such value claims. Hence openness understood this way results in a type of openness that erases evaluative distinctions and claims to superiority. Accordingly for Bloom, this moral opening is

⁴³ Bloom, 54.

rather an intellectual closing and, as he sees it, one that has put our higher education institutions, as well as the culture, into jeopardy.

It is with Bloom and his ironic use of an openness that closes that we are confronted with another aspect and problem of what it means to be open, particularly with relativism and its tendency toward a loss of measuring value, as a type of openness that causes some consternation in what Bloom thinks it means to be educated and the positive effects that it should have on culture. The ironic sense of openness that Bloom is referring to is on a cultural level and therefore not directly applicable to Hare's clear account of closedness understood as a dogmatic adherence. Hare's account depends upon holding to a clearly reasoned account and how one attitude is to be measured in light of the ability to reason. Bloom's account suggests something far more insidious was occurring in the name of openness - a cultural democratic value shift in America and its universities to disregard the use of reason as a means of discriminating among ideas. The cause for this alarm being the acceptance of certain schools of thought that undermined our ability to rationally evaluate, choose and prefer something that is better. However, Bloom's articulation of his fears, along with his account has not gone unnoticed; his approach has had its critics.

Martha Nussbaum, in her review of Bloom's book, finds an implicit elitism regarding his lack of surveying the entirety of the university scene as Bloom accounts for only a small and elite segment of the college and university setting.⁴⁴ She claims that not only is his treatment limited, but his results are dubious as well as his lack of accounting

⁴⁴ Martha Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press), 1997.

for multicultural and feminist issues. Nussbaum finds Bloom's thesis not only highly questionable, but lacking in the kind of academic support and rigor that Bloom seems to hold in high regard.⁴⁵ Perhaps the central difference between Nussbaum and Bloom is the democratic conception of the university. She sees it as a place for everyone to develop their "rational powers," whereas Bloom believes that it is only suited for a few "special natures."⁴⁶ This rejection of Bloom on the part of Nussbaum helped spawn her book *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education*, an account and survey of university and colleges all over the country. In her book, Nussbaum articulates a positive and well researched view of the academy as it is from many points across America. Her findings and conclusion show that there are many good institutions and individuals engaged in promoting rigorous academic skills, as well as Socratic approaches to dialogue with the intent to create values. While Nussbaum extols the virtue and defense of how liberal educational values are intended to and do in fact cultivate humanity, she gives only slight concern to the problem of relativism.⁴⁷ Nussbaum admits there may be issues surrounding relativism but she does not, however, see it as cause for alarm, but merely a perennial problem that with good guidance belongs as a possible debate of many positions that should take place in a healthy democratic university.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Nussbaum, 24.

⁴⁶ Nussbaum, 25.

⁴⁷ Nussbaum, 41.

⁴⁸ Nussbaum, 109.

Bloom's book was closely followed by a reprinting of Mortimer Adler's 1977 work, *Reforming Education*, but the 1988 edition had a new subtitle, *The Opening of the American Mind*, an explicit response to Bloom's book.⁴⁹ While Adler concedes that relativism is an issue regarding critical thinking, he finds Bloom's entire historical narrative problematic as relativism was and has been a perennial issue prior to Bloom's account.⁵⁰ Adler argues polemically against Bloom regarding the causes of relativism and goes so far as to claim, like Nussbaum, that Bloom's heritage in pedagogy had elitist and anti-democratic tendencies.⁵¹ Adler instead extols the virtues of what he defines as a truly democratic education through the employment of the dialectic method, over and against the doctrinal method employed by Bloom and his mentor, Leo Strauss. If relativism is indeed an issue, Adler thinks curricula employing the dialectical method in tandem with the Great Books are and always will be the best way to counter the problem of moral skepticism and relativism.⁵²

In 1996 Lawrence Levine published *The Opening of the American Mind: Canons, Culture and History*, yet another entry into this conversation and the critique of values that were clashing in American higher education. Levine argues directly against Bloom that American universities have been historically open places that have changed and

⁴⁹ Mortimer Adler, *Reforming Education: The Opening of the American Mind*, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company 1988), vii.

⁵⁰ Adler, xxix, xxx. Additionally one may consider the Sophists as an early account.

⁵¹ Adler, xxvi.

⁵² Adler, xxxiii.

developed largely because of the influx of differing cultures and immigrants. In a very affirmative position, the greatness and success of American higher education has been the result of its historical development. This positive development Levine indicates, is a direct result of the plurality of ideas, the openness to these differences and a struggle to sift out and develop the best curricula resulted in the success that is American higher education.⁵³ Contrary to both Bloom and Adler, Levine argues as a historian specifically against a conservative cultural myth that our educational institutions were created around and based on the “classic canon,” suggesting that institutions of higher learning have abandoned this tradition to the moral and intellectual detriment of our culture. This conservative myth sought to limit the types of things that are taught in the university and thus preserve a static and singular version of culture.⁵⁴ Levine argues that historically the opposite is true, particularly, the strength of the American university has operated and developed diametrically opposed to this kind of limiting. Being open and struggling with new and challenging traditions brought by immigrants, the influx of ideas and texts has brought about a flourishing in American education. He claims if we simply look to the historical development of education, we will see that such fears about our institutions are unjustified, as are Blooms conclusions and his adherents.⁵⁵

Similarly such concerns regarding openness and American education have not gone away, but have seemed to expand. A book entitled *Closed Minds? Politics and*

⁵³ Lawrence Levine, *The Opening of the American Mind: Canons, Culture and History*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996) xxvi – xix.

⁵⁴ Levine, 47.

⁵⁵ Levine, 170-174.

Ideology in American Universities, by Smith, Mayer and Fritschler was published in 2008 by the Brookings Institution. This book seeks to determine the extent of political or ideological bias that exists in American universities. This project founded on the criticism that American universities are the home of liberal bias, and that professors indoctrinate their students, the authors endeavor to establish whether such fears are well founded. To their surprise little is found on the part of their investigation that would show significant levels of bias in either a liberal or conservative direction as regarding pedagogy. They generally conclude that due to professors' drive toward research specialization and students' focus on vocationalism, there is little or no significance to the claim that universities have particular leanings to the left, much less to the right. Rather, the authors find a surprising lack of traditional discussion of civics and civic education, those conversations that might expose political orientations. In their estimation this has resulted in students lacking the notion of what a liberal education was originally supposed to produce: good citizens.⁵⁶

Though the book *Closed Minds* does not directly implicate Bloom's book as a impetus toward a cause of universities having a left bias, it nevertheless is important to note the suggestive influence of Bloom's thesis that the universities have moved toward the left, with the ironic use of openness in tow. Regardless, this cultural concern over the fear of universities leaning left, noted specifically in Levine, most likely prompted a Brookings study formulated towards investigating whether American universities do indeed have a leftist bias and the concern over the claim that students are being

⁵⁶ Lee A. Fritschler, Jeremy D. Mayer, Bruce Smith, *Closed Minds?: Politics and Ideology in American Universities*, (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2008.).

indoctrinated toward the left. It would seem however, that the Brookings study confirms the merits of Nussbaum and Levine in the general orientation of the universities.

Before concluding we might take a moment and look toward the field of educational theory and try to ascertain what dialogue already exists. In some sense we have already initiated a conversation as it has occurred among educational theorists who are not engaged specifically in the field of educational theory but who are well known theorist-practioners. The credentials of Allan Bloom, Mortimer Adler and Martha Nussbaum have already been put forth. But the controversy generated from Bloom's book concentrated on issues relating to the type of curricula to be used and to the extent relativism is understood as a problem. While the term openness has been often appealed to, the treatment of the subject of openness has been general. This may beg the question whether or not there is an account of some of the work that has been done touching the issue of openness in other areas and disciplines. It has been asserted that there is very little that exists in the way of explicitly defining and examining the issue of openness or closedness and certainly nothing regarding the present thesis that would connect reification with a closed mind. We must of course re-mention that William Hare's work is the exception. He is explicitly an educational theorist and has spent considerable time examining the topic. While his addition exists in this present inquiry as a primary source on the topic, his treatment of openness and closedness is a dispositional issue and does not offer the cognitive account I put forth.⁵⁷ Aside from Hare, however, there exists

⁵⁷ The term cognitive is of course used in contrast to Hare's account of dogmatism as closedness or what I might refer to as dispositional closedness. Reification, as will be argued, is located as cognitive issue whereas Hare argues that dogmatism is a both a volitional and emotive issue.

some literature that speaks to the topic generally and to authors within the field that are relevant to the larger question of openness. I will begin with a general and representative account of some who have covered the topic and narrow to those in the educational field as we proceed.

A study of openness and closedness as it relates to the mind is detailed in the book by psychologist Milton Rokeach. In his book *The Open and Closed Mind: Investigations into the Nature of Belief Systems and Personality Systems*,⁵⁸ Rokeach seeks to investigate the general structures of belief systems, particularly the way the mind manifests as either opened or closed in an account to uncover potential structural patterns so that we might better predict and understand the nature of belief and thought. Because Rokeach comes at his problems psychologically, he tries to explain the difference between a closed mind and an open one by the way a person believes and not necessarily the content of that belief. Rokeach attempts to measure these belief systems based on a continuum or what he refers to the “dogmatism scale.”⁵⁹ Those who are closed have and hold strongly dogmatic beliefs while those who are less dogmatic are considered, by degree, more open, or having lower instances of dogmatism.⁶⁰ He asserts that belief systems stem from two general motives, the need to understand and the need to protect the ego from those things that threaten it. In the most positive sense, an open mind or system of beliefs is

⁵⁸ Milton Rokeach, *The Open and Closed Mind: Investigations into the Nature of Belief Systems and Personality Systems*, (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1960).

⁵⁹ An example of Rokeach’s Dogmatism Scale can be viewed on page 413 while on page 71 He address the concept and instrument in narrative.

⁶⁰ Rokeach, 396 – 397.

measured by how freely a person will deliberate on the intrinsic merits of alternative ideas or information. Ideally, the open minded person will consider the intrinsic merit of opposing or novel views, evidence and sources, assessing each on their perceived credibility. On the other hand, Rokeach identifies a closed mind as one that is threatened.⁶¹ A closed mind will tend to accept or reject things based on several factors. Such threats are based on perceptions of how the issues correlate positively or negatively with chosen authorities, general intolerance to novelty, how isolated one may feel, anxiety over the future, how one will be perceived by others after accepting the idea, and the need for certainty. Rokeach asserts that a threatened mind will lead to a dogmatic stance, and hence a closed system of beliefs. A closed mind then is a correlative to a closed system of beliefs. It is how a mind behaves when threatened. A closed mind is understood in terms of dogmatism.⁶²

The idea of dogmatism or even indoctrination has continued to be a prominent theme when talking about closedness. We have already identified one of the most relevant contributions to this inquiry, William Hare's *Open-mindedness and Education*.⁶³ In this same context, then, Hare sets about explicitly to define, explain and defend a positive view of open-mindedness over and against popularized ambiguities of the term. Hare argues that open-mindedness is attitudinal and a necessity for what it means to be educated; however, in terms of what a closed mind is, Hare, similar to Rokeach, defines a

⁶¹ Rokeach, 403.

⁶² Rokeach, 377.

⁶³ William Hare. *Open-mindedness and Education*. 1970.

closed mind as one that has been subject to indoctrination, so that the individual cannot even see his own position with any degree of objectivity. For Hare, indoctrination is de facto closed mindedness. Admittedly for Hare, to be open-minded is to be able to consider and revise one's views. So if a person is or has been indoctrinated, they are considered unable to be in a position to examine their own views, much less consider opposing views.⁶⁴ Secondly, a person may be closed minded out of willfulness. That is, while they might be able to consider opposing views, they may be unwilling to do so. This suggests that an open mind, for Hare, is the ability to detach oneself from one's views and examine them in an objective manner.⁶⁵ In other words, one must be willing to consider the other view point and be "open" to evaluating it and against one's own.

Similarly, Elmer Thiessen in his book *Teaching for Commitment*⁶⁶ explores the idea how religious indoctrination manifests and interacts with liberal education and scientific and democratic ideals. Agreeing with Hare, Thiessen assumes that indoctrination results in a person being closed minded. As he explores this in a religious context, Thiessen posits the ideal of critical openness as the cure for dogmatism. Similarly, as in Rokeach and Hare, the ideal of critical openness suggest that an open mind is one that can examine the assumptions of its own thinking while at the same time consider evidence or the arguments of other views and can change accordingly if necessary. Thiessen goes back to the very roots of the Enlightenment to argue that

⁶⁴ Hare, 7.

⁶⁵ Hare, 8-9

⁶⁶ Elmer J. Thiessen. *Teaching for Commitment*, (Buffalo: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993).

critical openness is inherent in the Enlightenment's ideal of education and is a component to critical thinking. Over and against this notion, closedness is understood as non-rationally held beliefs. In contra-distinction to the above, a closed mind does not consider the evidence or arguments of other views but will hold on to its view regardless.⁶⁷

The above is a good sample of the type of discussion that exists on openness and closedness as referring to the disposition.⁶⁸ Perhaps what is important to note is the trend of viewing closedness as relating to indoctrination or at the very least an unwillingness to examine other views regardless of the weight of evidence. This unwillingness suggests that disposition or attitude plays an essential role in understanding how a mind is or becomes closed. Though Rokeach's psychological investigation suggests "threat" as a strong motivational influence, all three agree that openness requires a volitional component on the part of the subject to be open dispositionally in order to examine new evidence, that is, the willingness to consider new or additional evidence in light of present assumptions is the consummate objective of knowledge. Openness and closedness in this sense indicates the conditions of the subject's disposition.

This notion of dispositional openness is only furthered by numerous references in other sources. Perhaps influenced by Rokeach, the realm of psychology has used the idea

⁶⁷ Thiessen, 153-155.

⁶⁸ The support for this assertion lies simply in the lack of documents that exist in the broad field of the humanities and the more narrow research that was conducted in educational theory. While there will be additional material not noted here, the decision to use these was due to either their explicit attempt to deal with the subject itself, or in the case of the later authors, well known authorities who have across disciplines used the concepts though without much in way of definition.

of openness as a facet scale in the *NEO Personality Inventory*. Here “openness” is understood as “openness to experience.”⁶⁹ In assessing a personality, the test tries to account for the extent to which a person is or is not “open” and described in sub facets of Fantasy or the imaginative, Aesthetics, Feelings, Actions in terms of willingness to try new things or going new places, and finally Ideas or intellectual curiosity.⁷⁰

The field of research is also a venue that has accommodated this notion of openness. In his text, *Openness in research: the tension between self and other*, I. Maso, argues that openness is to be understood as a dispositional requirement in conducting social science research.⁷¹

But these examples above are only indirectly relatable to this inquiry. The above review attempts to acknowledge as a whole the problems and issues surrounding these terms. As we see, openness and closedness is indeed pervasively used but with often only intuitive understanding of how it is meant or in dispositional terms defined in light of dogma. As such, there is literature that attempts to delineate what is meant by openness and closedness with the educational context as we see in Hare, Rokeach and Theissen, specifically in defining closedness as indoctrination. There is of course even more literature from across the spectrum that makes use of openness as a condition to human nature that perhaps more actively involves our disposition and thus has an application in

⁶⁹ Paul T. Costa Jr, and Robert R. McCrae, *NEO Personality Inventory –Revised*. 2005.

⁷⁰ Costa Jr and McCrae.

⁷¹ I Maso, *Openness in Research: The Tension Between Self and Other*, (Assen, The Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1995).

research. But the above, while a sampling, does not add to the discussion on how to understand the notion of closedness for which we are presently arguing.

Narrowing our research within the field of recent educational theory publications yields similar results.⁷² What follows are two examples that deal with the topic at hand and yet consider the ideas of openness and closedness similarly as we have seen above.

One such typical example of the treatment of openness is Andrew Metcalf and Anne Game's, "Significance and Dialogue in Teaching and Learning."⁷³ In this article Metcalf and Game emphasize the importance dialogue plays in reducing the propensity of people who take defensive positions based on identity and instead are opened up through conversation and exchange.⁷⁴ It is argued that dialogue itself along with attempts to understand the other provide this moment of openness that is required for growth and development.⁷⁵

While the article provides some relevancy to the notion of openness, the treatment of what exactly is understood as "openness" is lacking and as such is typical of the literature the author has found. However, one relevant element that Metcalf and Game define is the ability for dialogue to suspend "the senses of time space and ontologies on

⁷² Researches concerning the topic of "openness and closedness" were explored in the data bases of *Educational complete*, *ERIC* and *The Journal of Educational Theory*.

⁷³ Andrew Metcalf, Anne Game, "Significance and Dialogue in Teaching and Learning", *Educational Theory*, Vol 58, no. 3 (2008): 343.

⁷⁴ Metcalf and Game, 345.

⁷⁵ Metcalf and Game, 346.

which identities are based.”⁷⁶ Metcalf and Game argue under a Hegelian logic of identity that provides the possibility of relations. Identities can only develop within the confrontation of difference in a context of exchange. This notion of interacting from difference and exchange provides the movement that is definitional in “education as a transformative rather than a simply accumulative process.”⁷⁷ This transformative experience, they argue, occurs in dialogue and causes shifts in one’s ontologies. Similar to my project and especially in light of the authors’ appeal to Hegel, these shifts from one understanding or from one ontology to another are rightly understood as reified forms that consciousness has taken in the process of transforming from one less adequate to a more substantial form of consciousness.⁷⁸

Metcalf and Game’s concern for the necessity for “shifting ontologies” become exceedingly important when we consider D.C. Philips article, “Dealing Competently with the Serious Issue of the Day: How Dewey (and Popper) Failed”. Philips argues that both Dewey and Popper had become dissatisfied with philosophy of their day in that the field of philosophy had become incapable of addressing any number of the pressing social and political issues.⁷⁹ While both might have seemed optimistic that this could be remedied, Philips argues that they both fail to show how to resolve the problem of

⁷⁶ Metcalf and Game, 343.

⁷⁷ Metcalf and Game, 346.

⁷⁸ In Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*, the movement between the stages of consciousness is seen in reified forms. This is argued in chapter two in defining the term and use of reification.

⁷⁹ Philips identifies Dewey’s text that address this topic; *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, 1957.

individuals who hold on to positions fanatically and as such without regard to being open.⁸⁰ Philips points to the issues that both thinkers identify the cause of this lack of openness as the inability to have rational dialogue. Philips contends that both Dewey and Popper's optimism fails because the position of the fanatic is so stringently defined and closed, that education and reason are lost values to them and have little to no effect.⁸¹

Philip's article is perhaps one of the few that does not simply address the idea of closedness in terms of simple dogmatism, although he is identifying the fanatic in those terms. What Philips provides is a healthy skepticism of education and philosophy's abilities, at least so conceived, in having any substantial impact in directly affecting a closed, fanatical position. Notably, the problems of dogmatism and the fanatic are closely associated. What makes Philip's article interesting in light of Metcalf and Games' is that the former argues that dialogue is the transformer of experience. Philips, along with Dewey and Popper, would agree with this under the condition that those engaged in dialogue are already open to having such an exchange, which will exclude those who Philips identifies as closed, i.e. the fanatic. What Philips provides in terms of openness and closedness is simply an understanding of the terms as they have been defined above. Closedness in the case of fanaticism is not just being closed to new evidence and reason, but is a dispositional quality of being unwilling to engage in that possibility.

⁸⁰ D.C. Philips, "Dealing "Competently with the serious issues of the Day;" How Dewey (and Popper) failed" *Educational Theory*, Vol. 62, No. 2,(2012): 1.

⁸¹ D.C. Philips, 17.

What we are not seeing is any attempt to identify the cognitive structures that either are a part of the volitional and emotive dispositional elements of dogmatists, or that may be considered and exist separately from this particular problem. This is then the point of the present inquiry and project: to show the cognitive element that adds or is a performative closure on the part of the mind. To this extent, no one has made an explicit argument that reification as static closures creates a closed mind. This thesis will of course be developed in the following pages.

The lack of scholarship then seems to suggest some questions, such as “Why isn’t there more on this subject?” or “Does this subject as such have any pertinent value?” This project began with the assertion that we are commonly engaged in using the terms open and closedness when speaking of people as this is common in our casual discourse. Additionally, we as educational theorists should address and define these terms intelligently. But if we merely consider Philip’s article of all those sources we have reviewed, the dual problem of philosophy and education’s struggle to stem fanaticism still makes itself felt in our world. It would seem that it is imperative to explore this topic even by way of negation, if it means resolving the problem of being closed and what it has caused in the social political sphere.

But this brief review of literature suggests the need for more attention to the entire subject, especially considering recent fundamentalism that demonstrates closedness as one of its main features. While these sources give some attention to the concepts of openness and closedness, we are left with a general and unsatisfying account of how to actualize the ideal of being open in the right way and avoid closed mindedness.

While the notion of disposition is provocative and begs exploring, especially in light of how one's dispositional stance might become closed, it is the literature that has not refined or explored intimately how this stance is to be achieved. While a broad exploration of educative disposition might then be warranted, limitation and narrow focus on achieving amplification on smaller inquiries can be more productive than the broad and undefined characteristics that have been suggested. Explicitly then, the intent of this project is to not follow brush strokes that have appeared vague and general, but to limit our investigation to analysis of one feature of closedness that is not accounted for in a dispositional approach. For convenience sake, a look at how reification plays into the problem of disposition is to suggest that this analysis is more cognitive than volitional, more oriented on operational aspects of thinking and learning rather than on how an emotional stance can be encourage or created. Examination and defining the stasis that occurs under the concept of reification will be our starting points in the next chapter with explanation on how it better informs our understanding of closedness.

In conclusion, for one to bring up the problems in understanding what is meant by the terms of an open and closed mind, we would again be amiss not mentioning the work of William Hare. As such it should stand noted in relatively high account regarding the general inquiry of what it means to have an open mind. However, we are recognizing a different problem that has not arisen explicitly in terms of Hare's inquiry, but has taken root as it were in 'full' Bloom. As we have seen, Bloom has given us an account of the state of American education that is characterized as having abandoned discriminating reason with an allegedly leaning left orientation. Of the many variables traced in Bloom's thesis, it is perhaps Nietzsche who is at the center with his lamentation that the

old gods are dead and with the concern of what will replace them. The distinct concern and anxiety with cultural relativity spawned from certain academic philosophies, such as Nietzsche's influence, and the acceptance of historicism. This alleged relativity seen as having in some certain aspects, resulted from these philosophies have become to some extent accepted and morphed in a democratic context as a moral postulate of cultural 'openness'.

Bloom's critics rightly urge us to reconsider the validity of his claims, particularly the fear of relativism. His critics more or less see relativism as a ubiquitous phenomenon that finds its early articulation in the Athenian sophists and perennially in the course of history, especially in the decades prior to when Bloom identifies the trouble in American institutions.⁸² In light of this we might ask if Bloom asserts a special claim in that we have a particular problem with America. Does our democratic form produced a unique moral relativism? The critics above may have some concern and agree that relativism is a problem when it disregards rational commitment. But this agreement is largely overshadowed by the disagreement of the severity of the problem and moreover what Bloom identifies as the causes. It is the elitism and nostalgia for the imagined golden days of the university that seems to unify the critics against Bloom. More strongly contested is the democratic value that other voices – the multiculturalists, feminists, and even relativists – have been and must continue to be a part of our American higher educational institutions.

⁸² Adler, *Reforming Education: The Opening of the American Mind*, (1988) xxx.

Yet we are reminded not only by the Brookings study, but by Levine's identification of a political atmosphere in which such fear and concern over relativism has had a profound effect. This effect is demonstrated in Lynn Cheney's 1992 report as the chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities. She suggests that relative notions of truth were being used by the left to further political agendas.⁸³ In an even more recent example Charles Colson, in his series *Do the Right Thing*, posits an ethical crisis in America that is as a result of cultural relativism. This reminds us that the concern over this issue is not dead, but very much alive and those many of those who are concerned carry cultural influence.⁸⁴ It is not only Bloom's incitement, but the fierce acceptance or its rejection, the effect his seeming message regarding the deplorable state of our higher educational institutions has wrought among his fans and opponents that partially impels this project.

But where does this leave us in terms of understanding openness? It will not be the purpose of this inquiry to answer all the particular fears and concerns over the alleged or real problems associated with that of cultural relativism, nor to defend Bloom from his critics. But it will be of interest to re-examine the question of openness in light of Bloom's use of the terms and the considerable controversy it has generated. His ironic play on the terms an 'opening' that ends up being a 'great closing', suggests a potential problem not only associated with relativity but with a certain tradition that might be referred to as continental philosophy. That tradition which brought us Nietzsche and

⁸³ Lawrence Levine, *The Opening of the American Mind: Canons, Culture and History*, (1996): 25, 158.

⁸⁴ <http://www.doingtherightthing.com/dtrt-home> (accessed, March 2012) see the introduction to this series where this claim is made.

Heidegger as well as others, has produced concern over their ideas in regard to relativity.

Central to this inquiry will be to articulate another understanding of the terms openness and closedness and in so doing use the thinkers of the continental tradition, those mentioned above whom Bloom sees as causing the loss of value distinction. As such, it is the hope that an understanding from within the continental tradition can shed light on how openness and closedness might look, and that concerns over relativism might fade as the thinkers we use will inevitably show great concern for truth and how we may be open or closed to such possibilities.

CHAPTER TWO

REIFICATION AND CLOSEDNESS

In our initial questioning we began by asking what an open or closed mind is. Openness and closedness in referring to the mind is so far only a metaphor used to express a comparable way to understand how a mind is thought to behave in regard to experience and ideas. We might note from the preceding discussion that openness, whether in Bloom's ironic pejorative use, or in a more positive account used by both Bloom and his critics, generally refers to openness and closedness apart from the mind and generally in terms of a dispositional state or condition of a person's approach to knowing. While it was not Bloom's project to define openness as such, the reference to what method or curriculum or set of values was appropriate to insure an approach that would open minds, rather than hinder them, was at stake.

We however intend to examine in a more specific way the problem of openness. But it is perhaps important to note that we are not reproducing Hare's account that explicitly defines open-mindedness as a dispositional state over and against a disposition of dogmatism. Our intent is to approach the subject by the route of an unlikely concept, that of reification. Reification as a concept has had a time honored ubiquity in literature throughout history. In what follows I will show some of its uses and flesh out a definition that will aid in our understanding of the larger issue of openness and closeness. I suggest that the use of reification is an unlikely concept for our examination as, to the

best of my knowledge, has never been explored as such. With this hope then the inquiry will proceed with the hope of amplifying the concept of reification specifically in terms of “closedness” and it is phenomenal explanation in the philosophies of Immanuel Kant and Martin Heidegger, two thinkers important to the continental tradition that has some reference to the first chapter.

Reification

What then is reification? The term derives its origin from the Latin *res* meaning thing, object or actual matter, while its suffix, -ication or *facere*, means “to make/take/turn into”.¹ In German the word for reification is *Verdinglichung*, or thingification.² Literally then, reification means making or turning something into a thing. We might then ask “who” is doing the turning or making in the case of reification. We may easily grant that the making or turning into a thing is not a divine act, one that occurs out of nothingness, but a human action. If reification occurs, we might infer that it is a human phenomenon, one that implies we are already working in a medium, with existence, creatively, as the term *making* or *turning* suggests. Is this making/turning simply an artistic endeavor changing the form of matter that already exists? When looking at basic definitions of reification, one immediately understands that in terms of making/turning, the process is mental. The Oxford English Dictionary specifically defines reification as a “mental conversion of a person or abstract concept into a thing,” indicating that reification is indeed a human phenomenon and one that is performed by

¹ D. P. Simpson, *Cassell's Latin Dictionary*, (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1987).

² *Collins German-English, English-German dictionary*, (London: Collins, 1980).

the mind.³ So then what is the nature of this mental conversion? How is this turning/taking/making into a thing done? What is implied in this mental conversion? Is reification an error or is it simply a creative act? Are reifications inappropriate in their converting or is it something necessary in the process of abstracting?

We might quickly note the distinction of reification in terms of persons or abstractions. According to the definition it would seem both have the potential to become reified. In terms of reification of persons, the Marxist tradition takes this problem quite seriously and gives it a great deal of attention. I will address Marx in due time, but let it be understood that converting a person into a thing is generally understood as a value reduction of a human being, or reification understood as dehumanization. But we must note that in the case of the definition in as much as people are objects of perception, they are in fact subject to abstraction. That is to say that the process of abstracting from our experience is more primary regardless of whether we are involved with inert objects, or animals or persons. Therefore we will concentrate on the issue of abstraction. How is it that an abstraction gets converted and is it appropriate? This may beg other issues such as what are abstractions? Are only certain kinds of abstractions prone to reification, while others are not? Is it possible to have an abstraction that can remain unreified? Again, is reification a necessary correlation to abstracting or is it inappropriate to abstracting?

Aside from merely identifying reification as a human act, other sources, such as the Philosopher's Dictionary, consider reification a “*mistaken* way of thinking about some

³ *Oxford English Dictionary*, (New York: Oxford University Press 1993), 532.

abstract notion as if it were a thing”.⁴ If reification can be reduced in part as a human *taking* of an abstraction and *turning* it into a thing, then some views consider reification as a *mis-taking*. Early citations of the term suggest the same issue. Grote writes, “Boiocalus would have had some trouble to make his tribe comprehend the reification of the god Helios”.⁵ Grote seems to suggest that Greek tribes were mistaking events or situations and explaining them in terms of positing a deity. In other words, if the wind did not fill their sails of their ships, the Greeks thought the gods were not happy. While we might note that Marx's conception of the mis-taking or turning is usually in terms of reduction, Grote and others see reification in terms of mental creations that are wholly fallacious. Similarly J.S. Mill identifies this mis-taking in his text on logic. Though he does not use the term 'reification', he does define what he considers a “natural fallacy” of ascribing objective existence to abstractions.⁶ Mill thinks there is a natural tendency in people to presume that whatever the mind conceives of must also have a corresponding object that exists.⁷ Whether it is Plato's positing of “The Good” or Grote's early Greek theology, or one’s inference of “Fate” or “Nature” or even one’s reference to the “State,”

⁴ Robert M. Martin, *The Philosopher's Dictionary*, (Petersborough Ont.: Broadview Press 1994), 202.

⁵ Oxford English Dictionary,

⁶ J.S. Mill, *A system of Logic Ratiocinative and Inductive*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 756.

⁷ Mill, 757.

there is perhaps a perennial problem of mis-taking the abstractions as a certain sort of real, existing thing.⁸

While there seems to be a vast difference between a Marxist notion of reification and of the above in terms of the subject that is affected by reification, error is still implied. With Marx the error might simply be understood as a categorical mistake with the implication that that a human is not a thing. But that is perhaps an over simplification, for the issue that arises is one of ethics. Humans, while having real objective existence, are thought to have, or should be considered to have, intrinsic value. On the other hand, reifications of abstractions are troubling in another way. It would seem that any mental conversion of an abstraction into a thing, understood as existing, whether it is a belief in a god, or lesser things, still suggests an error.

But in terms of reification, the phenomenon that we wish to clarify, there is another term that some have used to preserve the above distinction between taking/turning of abstractions and people into things. This term is Hypostatization and might be considered in origin as the Greek equivalent to its Latin other - reification. *Hypo* in Greek means 'under' or that which stands beneath, while *statization* means "causing to stand or stop."⁹ Kant speaks of hypostatization as the moment our "outer

⁸ It then might be noted that the existence of such things like, 'nature' or 'the state', have a reality that is indeed mental, but not private, but a public abstraction. Part of the problem that will emerge is when these mental conventions take on an existence that surpasses the conventionality. Existence becomes understood as if reality had no mental component, but was brute fact.

⁹ Oxford English Dictionary ED. <http://dictionary.oed.comflagship.luc.edu> (accessed December 10, 2007).

sense has something standing and abiding in it, which supplies substratum grounding”.¹⁰³⁶

Here Kant speaks of our sense intuitions; the external world provides our concepts material from which we *make* determinations. According to the OED hypostatization is defined as “to make into” or regard as a self-existent substance or person; to embody, impersonate.” Note that the verb in the OED, “to make into...” is used similarly as in reification.¹¹ It might seem that we have something of an equivocation of terms then as hypostatization seems much like the way we are defining reification, or at the very least, there are similarities to the mental conversions that we are trying to describe. However, distinctions are possible. The *Dictionary of Philosophy* defines hypostatization as a special sort of philosophical reification. But these distinctions are not held hard and fast. In his article, “What is the fallacy of Hypostatization,” Morris Engel suggests that hypostatization occurs, “when we regard an abstract word as if it were a concrete *thing*.” Not only do the definitions seem to overlap, but even Engel sources some who use the term reify as an instance of the fallacy of hypostatization. For instance, Engel quotes Gardiner's *The Cool Arm of Destruction: Modern Weapons and Moral Insensitivity*: “...through reifying the symbolic constructions of the imaginations, as if they had objective existence of their own;”¹² But there are confusions of the two terms in other areas, such as secondary sources on Kant. The German term *Verdinglichung* can be

¹⁰ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Guyer and Wood. (Cambridge University Press 1998), 432.

¹¹ Oxford English Dictionary, 579.

¹² Engel S. Morris. 1995. What is the fallacy of Hypostatization? <http://www.chssmontclair.edu/inquiry/summ95/engel.html>, (accessed December 10, 2007).

either translated as reification or as hypostatization, such as in HOFFE's commentary on Kant¹³ or as in Guyer and Wood's translation of Kant's first critique. One might ask, why then this issue of equivocation? What does it tell us? While the phenomenon is acknowledged as a problem, the similarity and equivocation with hypostatization suggests that it is not necessarily clear what the difference is. At the very least, the need for clarity is part of the task at hand. I am not interested in merely pursuing the term; rather I intend to focus on the phenomenon that stands behind such terms. Furthermore, this will have implications on the methodological approach I will use. This will not then be just philosophical analysis, but it is in a real sense a phenomenological approach.

The Tradition

But if one is to examine the phenomenon of reification, then perhaps looking at the literature that gave rise to its modern usage is even more essential than looking at dictionary definitions rendered from sources such as the ones above. One might begin with Georg Lukacs, who uses the term perhaps the most prominently in his seminal work *History of Class Consciousness*.¹⁴ It is in this text that Lukacs identifies reification in terms of how consciousness becomes set and affected by the social structures, most notably under the auspices of capitalism. Capitalism by its very operations determined the terms and conditions regarding how one was to view himself in relation to others. In other words, the economic force of capitalism set to reifying man's consciousness in how he not only understood himself, but how he related to the rest of society. Such

¹³ Otfried Hoffe, *Immanuel Kant*, (Munich: C.H. Beck. 1983), 113.

¹⁴ Georg Lukacs, *The History of Class Consciousness*, Trans. Rodney Livingstone, (Cambridge: MIT Press. 1923).

elaboration of reification was made possible by Karl Marx. While Marx actually never used the term reification, he did lay the groundwork by addressing the phenomenon in his book: *Capital*.¹⁵ In terms of reification as the process of mental conversions, he uses such terms as “alienation,” “false consciousness” and “commodity fetishism” to identify key moments that describe the way in which the economic structure of capitalism dominates and determines the nature of social relations. Marx points out that the language of capitalism uses such abstract terms as “value,” “labor” and “property”, which takes on a “phantom objectivity” and becomes a dominating factor in how the self and social relations are determined. It was important for Marx to show that the assumed structures or abstractions created a “false consciousness” of how people understood themselves and their neighbors. Marx understood that when people were viewed by and through economic structures, their value shifted from the qualitative sphere to the quantitative, a considerable reduction. Lukacs strongly echoes this notion and spends considerable time in noting the way reification affects not only the working class but the entire social structure in terms of consciousness. In other words, Lukacs develops Marx's ideas by arguing that what is essential in reification is not only the results, i.e. actual instances of dehumanization, but the process by which the consciousness itself accepts these terms, especially by those who are treated as things. In other words, it is both the proletariat as well as the bourgeois consciousness that fall prey to the reifying affects of capitalism. Marx exposes an essential moment in how we see the phenomenon in dialectical terms.

¹⁵ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Trans. from the 3d German ed. by Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling, (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica 1955)

Lukacs expands on this theme and concentrates on pointing out how modern capitalistic structures reify consciousness.¹⁶

But perhaps reification as a phenomenon can be found earlier. Marx's predecessor Georg W. Hegel, in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, shows how consciousness is formed through successive stages of development, i.e. sense perception, perception, understanding and self consciousness.¹⁷ Each stage comes to an end through the assertion of a contradiction, propelling the next step to be taken, in other words, the dialectic. While Marx exploited this notion for his account of historical materialism, Hegel concentrated on the movement of conscious development and believed that our knowledge of the world came about through a mediated social and organic relationship. In speaking about Hegel's process of the dialectic, Herbert Marcuse refers to Hegel's first three sections of his *Phenomenology of Spirit* as nothing other than a critique of reification.¹⁸ Marcuse points out that the dialectic is nothing other than the process of reification at one moment only to be later subverted or de-reified by its antithesis. This is clearly the larger implication used by Marx and his predecessors who focused not on the development of consciousness itself, but rather on the larger historical development of society. In either case, the dialectic can be said to be an instance of the phenomenon of reification, whether on the point of the individual consciousness or the larger social

¹⁶ Lucien Goldmann, *Lukacs and Heidegger*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. 1977), 29.

¹⁷ G.W. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977). These stages are the subsequent name of the first three sections of the work.

¹⁸ Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory*, (New York: Humanities Press 1955), 112- 113.

structures. It might be noted that with each differing emphasis there exists a distinction between the reifying of consciousness and that of larger social structures. What might also be noted is the distinction between orientations: reification as a macro-social/institutional issue, and reification on the micro level of individual consciousness.

In a more contemporary articulation of reification, Berger and Luckmann pick up on this notion of the social structural approach in their text, *The Social Construction of Reality*.¹⁹ Here reification is understood in terms of human apprehension in taking social structures, institutions and ideas not as human constructions, but as in either super human or in non human terms. In other words, there is a notion of error here, or as Berger and Luckmann suggest, “reification implies that man is capable of forgetting his own authorship of the world” and that anytime man objectifies his social structures or institutions, reification is inevitable.²⁰ So while Berger and Luckmann admonish us to see the problem of institutional reification on a large scale that is how it creates a de-humanized world with the suggestion that dialectically de-reification is necessary. What is unclear in Berger and Luckman, as well as many in the Marxist tradition, is the question “Is complete de-reification possible?” On this question it might appear that this Hegelian/Marxist tradition is somewhat divided by degree, some believing in the necessary de-reifying of capitalism in order to move positively into a unreified existence or later versions that suggest de-reification is going to be a continual process, that is of undoing the human structures that continually assert themselves.

¹⁹ Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, (New York: Doubleday, 1966).

²⁰ Berger and Luckmann, 82-83.

Another place relevant to issues of reification is the hermeneutic tradition beginning with Martin Heidegger, who suggests that man's appropriation of "Being" is part of what it means to be human. That man in terms of "Dasein", an existential being set in history, "always already" with a static set of notions and beliefs about the world.²¹ That to understand man in his hermeneutic interpretive situatedness is to see the potential relevancy of reification in this tradition. If Hegel's dialectical moments are nothing but similar abstractions of the world, being subverted by the next step, then any hermeneutic approach is also bound to have reifying potential. While Berger and Luckmann emphasize authorship of the world in terms of constructivism, hermeneutics affirms the same notion. That our appropriation of the world may be complete is to suggest reification is a constant threat to which we must always be aware. In the hermeneutic tradition this is perhaps seen in its extreme in the figure of Jacques Derrida, whose deconstruction could be argued as the attempt at undoing all things which are held as reified.²² This might beg a question on the most basic terms: what then is the difference between *de*-construction and *de*-reification? While that question might not get its answer here, it seems that constructivism might have its own views regarding reification. Burke Thomason's *Making Sense of Reification* identifies the idea of dialectic and the possibility

²¹ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Trans. Macquarrie & Robinson. (San Francisco: Harper & Row. 1962), 25, 82-83. We might suggest several, if not all of Heidegger's contributions as hermeneutic are thus related. In specific reference to Dasein however, *Being and Time*, his seminal work is perhaps most notable.

²² Timothy Bewes, *Reification or The Anxiety of Late Capitalism*, (New York: Verso, 2002), 13-14. Bewes will make this argument as well. Again, similar to Heidegger, instead of referencing simply one text, the suggestion is that the whole of 'deconstruction' has commonality to issues concerning reification.

of de-reification through an examination of Alfred Schutz's writings on constructivism.²³⁴²

That is, Burke argues from Schultz's ideas, that there needs to be dialectic between reification and de-reification. But this is only acceptable if it is understood in *methodological* terms rather than an *ontological* error. Burke develops this dialectic between what he refers to as a passive and active stance in interpreting the world. Reification is a process where reified constructions are allowed to be productively assumed, with the implicit understanding of their provisionality. That is, one understands that the *taking* or *turning* into a thing is in fact a human construction. The suggestion here is that if one approaches reification in terms of a methodological approach, then one attempts not to forget that these reifications are not to be ontologically set in the mind. The hope here, similar to the hermeneutic approach, is that one may get some mileage or explanatory power from these static constructions. In her book *The Human Condition*, Hanna Arendt notes this similarity in terms of Schultz's positive use of reification. She defines reification as one of the essential components of human creativity by explaining reification in terms of *fabrication*.²⁴ This concept of fabrication, similar to *making/turning*, hearkens to the Greek concept of *poiesi*, or that idea of what man brings forth abstractly from the matter. Arendt suggests that this process of making, i.e. man's labor, has a way of being essential to him. Man creates and finds identity in transforming his world through his labor. In other words, through labor man finds meaning. But in

²³ Burke Thompson, 1982, *Making Sense of Reification: Alfred Schutz and Constructionist Theory*, (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1982).

²⁴ Hanna Arendt, *The Human Condition*, (University Chicago Press, 1958), 139-144.

terms of our point, the making or reification, Arendt asserts that man is also just as free to undo his work.

Finally there is Timothy Bewes' book *Reification or the Anxiety of Late Capitalism*.²⁵ Bewes develops an argument involving a modern fixation with the concept of reification itself. Such concern over the issue of reification, Bewes argues, is a sign of our anxiety from living in an overly fast-paced society with all its excesses of market driven consumption. Bewes traces how our concern with reification implies a desire on the part of society to find its ground or its obsession for the real or given. Bewes spends time developing a thorough account of reification, with the intention of focusing on why it has become a topic or problem for modernity. With an understanding of reification as inevitable, Bewes suggests that anxiety over the notion itself is a necessary correlation to this age. But Bewes claims that any explicit notion of reification implies its possible liberation or the possibility of de-reification. Bewes ends his text by suggesting that the implicit anxiety over this concept shows that we not only desire getting back to something solid, but that underneath this lack is a need for intimacy in light of our social conditions.²⁶

To summarize then, the “terms” reification, and its relative, hypostatization, seem to have been understood as something more akin to an error or fallacy, that the mis-taking or mis-turning of either an abstraction or person into a thing ascribes an ontological status to the abstraction that is inappropriate. But from the philosophical literature, the way the

²⁵ Timothy Bewes, *Reification or the Anxiety of Late Capitalism*, 2002.

²⁶ Bewes, 9.

phenomenon is dealt with suggests reification has larger implications. Whether in the Marxist tradition, the hermeneutic tradition or constructivism, reification takes on implications for how human consciousness perceives the world. In hermeneutics and constructivism, reification seems to have a constitutive element in terms of what it means to interpret or construct a world and so it might be pointed out that the turning or taking of abstractions is indeed the nature of our interaction with the external world, part of our interpreting. In this sense reification takes on a larger significance than being just a mere fallacy. This suggests possibly that reification is part of what it means to interpret, but if we understand reification as an ascription of thing-hood or ontological stasis to those interpretations, the reification becomes understood as a problem of holding or statisizing one's interpretations such that they become a performative closure.

In what follows, I want to examine this problem of reification as a form of closedness. If we've understood the concept of reification to be a problem of interpretation, rather than simply a mistaking of an abstraction as a disparate thing, then understanding how interpretation in general maybe prone to this problem is extremely relevant. However, it is hard to speak about closedness without reference to openness. With the emphasis regarding reification as closedness we will focus on this rather than adding the burdensome task of also defining openness. But in speaking about one, it will be hard to not suggest the other, even if by implication. In this sense, openness will be referred to as the general problem. In this way then I wish to concentrate quite specifically on the idea of closedness, particularly in terms of the very phenomenon itself and how it occurs in light of reification. Even so, I will make a distinction and departure from what has been broadly understood in terms of closedness as indoctrination and

retain the concept of openness as the ability to consider new possibilities, via Hare.

Instead I will examine the phenomenon of a closed mind under the concept of reification in a hermeneutic paradigm rather than through a traditionally Marxist understanding of the term. When understood in its fullest sense, reification can be thought of as the mental stasis of interpretations or concepts, i.e. abstractions. This of course includes statically reducing people to things as understood by Marx's followers. My use of reification is to enlarge and exploit this term beyond the ethical implications as used by Marx's followers, most notably Lukács. These statically held abstractions can be as little as disparate concepts, or people and as well as larger sets of interpretations; i.e. worldviews. Relating how reification is a problem of mental stasis will be directly related to how one should think of a certain sort of closedness of mind. Additionally, I suggest that reification has never been used to describe closedness. There are perhaps many terms that have been associated and used to describe closedness, such as "bias" and "dogmatic." Regarding these terms, and perhaps others, I will show how reification is distinctive in its use toward amplifying our understanding of what it means to have a closed mind.

Additionally and perhaps as importantly, I will assert that the problem of an open or closed mind is essentially and foremost an educational issue. First, the question of what an open or closed mind is and the question of its value rightly falls in the purview of educational theory. For who should better attempt to understand, define and discuss the condition of student's minds and their potential receptivity than our educational leaders? Who is better suited to the task of how an open or closed mind is to be rightly understood than those who claim to define the nature of educational aims, purposes, processes and

ideals? If educators are not involved in knowing and discussing such issues, it is to their and our detriment. As we've already seen in William Hare, educators have already been about this business. In that spirit then, I hope to add or amplify our understanding of such terms, albeit even if it be in a small way.

Secondly, to the educator, whether a mind is open or closed has special significance. For if such a term points out a meaningful problem or elicits an imperative ideal, the teacher will be the professional who must deal with its positive or negative manifestations in the most immediate sense. If imparting knowledge to students is in any way helped or hindered by the phenomenon in question, then the teacher has much to gain by being not only knowledgeable on a such a topic, but also by understanding how to practically engage and interact with students who might be hindered by closedness. Lastly and perhaps most importantly, I would suggest that the very examination and the definitions that will be exposed in the relevant literature and this study on the subject of openness or closedness are essential to the process of education itself. Without giving an adequate argument here, I hope that the following pages will show in bas-relief that one's disposition to being open or closed will qualitatively make a difference in the process of learning. It is a major assumption of the examination itself that the degree or condition of openness on the part of the person will necessarily affect their quality of education.

Specifically then I will examine several thinkers from the continental tradition who have much to add to the discussion on how we think and interpret specifically in the light of how we assigning ontological status to our abstractions, human or other. In other words I intend to show through these thinkers where and how reification begins to play a part in human consciousness and as a human phenomenon. Examining reification then

through these continental sources, it is hoped that a new elucidation and amplification of reification as closedness becomes clear. Second, that some misperceptions of the continental tradition are at least shown to not lead to an auto-closedness, such as Bloom suggests, because of the subjectivity that is to some degree is embraced in this tradition. Moreover, I hope it becomes apparent in light of the issue of relativism indicated by Bloom that reification as an instance of closedness will expand our awareness regarding the problem of openness and that one does not need to concede and hence surrender to the type of closing that Bloom suggests.

In terms of method then, understanding the issue of reification, or that of a closed mind, is to stipulate that the inquiry will concern itself as a study of the phenomena of reification. Because reification is a human act, an act of consciousness with regard to how it “takes” the world, we may rightly call the investigation a phenomenology of closedness. Our examination will begin specifically with Kant with special note of his distinguishing of idea of phenomenal character of perception. With the addition of Heidegger, this initial orientation develops into a full-blown idea of phenomenology understood as the study of how things appear to consciousness.²⁷ Certainly this is a conceptual study as theory warrants, but pursuing the object of our investigation will occur via the continental tradition and as such approaching it in its own language and set of concepts, namely that of phenomenology, will be essential. Part of the thematic tracing of the idea of reification from this tradition through certain thinkers is to show that given certain philosophical developments, reification is an eminent and perhaps

²⁷ Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, trans. Dorian Cairns, (The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999).

necessary occurrence that is indeed already operating and leads/suggests the possibility of a closed mind in a way that not only amplifies Hare's account, but also a fundamental account of openness.

Hermeneutics or an interpretive assumption will then dominate the study. The continental tradition largely ascribes that man is *de facto* a subject, and as such is thoroughly constituted in this manner, embracing human finitude. The implication of this is that his epistemic orientation is necessarily one of being an interpreter. While correspondence theories may be compatible with phenomenology, we will see why being limited in our cognitive capacities will mean that hermeneutics is more primary and appropriate to understanding human being.

There is of course an imminent sense of irony that any conceptualization, including any established by this examination, can also be prone to reify effects. It is exactly this problem that the study wishes to expose and clarify so that if one's interpretations or conceptualizations are so prone, one may keep an awareness of the inherent pitfalls, i.e. reifications, of holding them too rigidly.

In Chapter One having introduced the problem of openness via Bloom's controversial portrayal, we approached closedness as a problem of relativity, a problem Bloom and much of culture still see as an issue and one that is thought to stem from the continental tradition. In this chapter we explicitly intended to exploit the term reification as an example of closedness. Giving an initial account of what reification is sets us up for a more in depth account of its relevancy in relation to the problem of closedness, especially as it pertains to the continental tradition. Chapter Three will examine some of Kant's basic contributions and how his Copernican revolution has provided the basis for

a transcendental idealism in our approach to understanding. In Chapter Four, we will examine Heidegger's existential phenomenology of Being and round out how reification is implicitly involved in his phenomenological investigation of human consciousness. Reification will be understood as hermeneutically as static interpretations or disclosures. Reification understood as static closures will imply a concealing of other possible interpretations, or in other words, the closing of what should ideally remain open. In the final chapter we draw out Heidegger's notion of disclosures as also concealing process that constitutes the cognitive process. This will be explained by a rethinking of the relationship of open and closed as a dynamic as it affects human knowing, rather than simplistic binary notions. Additionally, with the help of Aristotle, we will make a distinction between an inactive cognitive stasis as reification over and against the idea of one having an actively held stance or concepts that are not reified. Lastly will examine some modes where reification appears with the clarification that between the difference of reification on the basic primary or personal level and to larger instances and results of how reification occurs at the larger social structural level.

Additionally, we hope that it will become apparent from the above and the following examination that from a continental perspective we will show that with reification and closure comes a concern for an implicit openness to the truth that is ardently assumed and operationally relevant to the entire subject. While it is not the purpose of this project to engage much of Bloom's thesis, we will indirectly engage that part he identifies as partly responsible, the "Nietzscheanization of the university's left"²⁸ that he suggests has resulted a problem of cultural relativism or the opening that is a great

²⁸ Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind*, 1987, 217

closing. Upon the completion of this task of examining reification that exists implicitly in the continental tradition we will spell out the implications and connections and how it informs our understanding of closeness. Additionally, and hopefully, the very process will also expose a sympathetic portrayal and reading of the continental tradition that is appropriate to rejecting the claim that these thinkers have led us to the doors of relativism and therefore a closedness that Bloom and others have asserted.

CHAPTER THREE

KANT: THE HUMAN PREDISPOSITION TOWARD METAPHYSICS AND THE LIMITS OF REASON

In chapter 2 we noted that the definition of reification implied a fallacy or mis-taking, an error that consists of ascribing an existence to a concept that is inappropriate. Again, when a mental abstraction on our part is turned into a thing, the *turning into* is the active part of giving the abstraction concreteness. We might say then that when it attains thing-ness by our part, we have a case of conceptual statization. When such an abstraction or mental representation is held statically as if it were an existing thing as such, we have an instance of reification. It may be that while a general definition of reification is apparent throughout literature, partially shown here, its philosophical explanation is still lacking. In hopes of achieving a reasonable showing of reification philosophically, we hope to not only show its immanent possibility but its explanative power regarding the issue of “closedness”. From the above notion that a reified concept is an inappropriate metaphysical positing, we will begin our investigation of reification with Immanuel Kant, that pivotal figure who addressed the limits of human reason.

We have chosen to begin with Kant because of his decisive position in the history of philosophy. In some senses he is a key figure in several respects and I think offers a fruitful place to begin a philosophical elaborative account of reification. First is that Kant was motivated to find a solution between two competing approaches to the problem of

knowledge in his day. Secondly and more directly, is his answer, as indicated in his first critique, in which he investigates the limits of reason.¹ Specifically, how he defines the limits of human reason will have relevancy in understanding the philosophical roots of reification. What follows is not an intended comprehensive exposition of Kant's entire project, but will draw out and concentrate only on those essential points especially as they pertain to the argument at hand of a philosophical grounded notion of reification. We will concentrate then on Kant's concerns with the problem of metaphysics, as a current issue of his day, as the impetus that drives him and his solution to this problem; the Copernican revolution and its move towards idealism.² Finally, we will give an account of how Kant understand the limitations of human reason, specifically how it is that reason desires that which it cannot attain and why it is prone to overstepping its bounds. It is however the impulse for this overstepping that is our natural predisposition to ask and seek the metaphysical:

But now this kind of cognition is in a certain sense also to be regarded as given, and metaphysics is actual, if not a science yet as a natural predisposition. For human reason, without being moved by the mere vanity of knowing it all, inexorably pushes on, driven by its own need to such questions that cannot be answered by any experiential use of reason and of principles borrowed from such a use; and thus a certain sort of metaphysics has actually been present in all human beings as soon as reason has extended itself to speculation in them, and it will always remain there.³

¹ Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Guyer and Wood, Cambridge, 1998.

² I will be drawing from Gardner and Redding's idealistic reading of Kant, opposed to the more analytical approach. This distinction will be elaborated on in the remaining part of the chapter.

³ Kant, B21, 147.

The above quote is taken from Kant's Introduction to his *Critique of Pure Reason*, where he declares that to be human, it is impossible to be indifferent to the pursuit of the metaphysical. The positive assertion here is that it is very much part of our natural propensity. This is also true of reification for as we will see these are not separate issues. As Kant is suggesting, human interests are naturally propelled to seek the metaphysical, I will argue that it is in this same desire for attaining "the real" or the thing "in-itself" that the static concepts that imply reification becomes an imminent possibility. The process of reification implies a metaphysical positing on the part of the subject whose abstraction has been turned in to a "thing-concept," indeed it is how it becomes an identifiable entity for the subject. While the interest or pursuit of the metaphysical does not necessitate reification, the mental abstractions we draw from and superimpose on our experience can very often become statically held in such a way as to be reified. In Kant we will refer to how reason desires this very capturing of the thing itself is an instance of reason's desire to stabilize its concepts or exceed its bounds. Later in Heidegger we will examine a different account of how we come to hold these realities or things that will provide further a explanation of the why and how abstractions become static and see it as a form of closure. Prior to this however, we will examine those relevant philosophical themes in Kant and show where the legitimacy of such a phenomenon as reification arises in terms of human cognition.

Immanuel Kant began his career in an age when the idea of metaphysical knowledge, the limits of what we could know or what could be known, was under scrutiny. Kant, having been steeped in Leibnizian-Wolffian rationality, was beginning to entertain doubts as to the credibility of its claims. Kant throughout his early career was

coming to think that positions proposed by G. W. Leibniz and his mentor Christian Wolff were not as tenable as he had once believed.⁴ As such, rationalist philosophy was beginning to taking on a dogmatic character in light of the skeptical challenges of the Empiricists, most notably David Hume, the Scottish empiricist. In Kant's own words he claims that it was Hume who had "awoken him from his dogmatic slumbers,"⁵ by arguing that our metaphysical beliefs about the world, whether it was empirical or speculative were not grounded on reason, but were founded on the associative functions of the mind or what Hume coined as customs and habits. For Kant such skeptical conclusions were as unacceptable just as much as the lack of rational grounds of the rationalist that Hume had exposed. To Kant it seemed that the "Queen of all sciences;" metaphysics, was in trouble and needed defending.⁶ It was this context that impelled Kant to pursue an examination of the limits of human knowledge in his work "Critique of Pure Reason," in hopes of finding a path for legitimate knowledge between the Scylla of skepticism and Charybdis of dogmatic rationalism.

For our sake we might emphasize that Kant begins his examination with the question of asking a fundamental question, "Whether such a thing as metaphysics be even possible at all."⁷ Accordingly Kant assumes that dogmatic rationalism and empirical skepticism are not going to be viable options along with the addition that we cannot be

⁴ Sebastian Gardner, *Kant and the Critique of Pure Reason*, (London: Routledge 1999), 4, 14-15.

⁵ Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, trans. Lewis White Beck, (New York: Macmillan, 1950), 8.

⁶ Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, A ix, 99.

⁷ Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, 3

indifferent to metaphysical speculation, but that our human existence is one of constantly seeking the metaphysical and asking questions about the nature of reality. To Kant, the tendency toward the metaphysical is so basic to human reasoning that one cannot simply isolate empirical scientific judgments from the basic operations of common sense. Human reason in both cases operates on the same principles that “reason sees itself necessitated to take refuge in principles that overstep all possible use in experience.”⁸ This is an important point in understanding Kant, as he is not asking in a skeptical tone whether metaphysics *is* at all possible, but is asking *how* it is possible. Metaphysics is not in question in terms of its factual basis, which Kant is suggesting is already occurring in the operations of human reason, but the real battle over metaphysics, is to understand the *how* of its possibility or its rightful and legitimate employment. Given that Kant understands the problem of metaphysics not so much a factual problem, but a question as to its legitimacy, he does not pursue the issue from a metaphysical stance, but instead his approach in the Critique takes on a reflexive stance focusing on how reason relates to itself, how it operates and functions, an examination of its limits. Hence Kant’s contribution is an investigation of the limits of human reason, and the conditions that make human knowledge possible.⁹

In preserving our natural propensity towards the metaphysical and examining reason’s limits in context of overcoming the problem between a rationalistic dogmatic positing and skepticism, Kant innovatively reverses the ancient epistemological formula of our mind conforming to objects. Traditionally, prior to Kant, it was thought that the

⁸ Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, A viii. 99.

⁹ Gardner, 1999, 22

mind was passively affected by objects in the world, and those objects were the cause of and produced our mental representations.¹⁰ This was and still is to some degree understood as a general account of correspondence theory of knowledge. Knowledge or truth is attained to the degree of the mind corresponding to the object. In the Latin; “*veritas est adequatio intellectus ad rem*” or truth is adequation of the intellect to the thing. However it is the tension between dogmatism and skepticism that provokes Kant to question this traditional understanding. To solve the problem, Kant reverses this formula by asserting that objects we experience in the world instead conform to our mind. This is referred to famously as his Copernican Revolution:

Up to now it has been assumed that all our cognition must conform to the objects; but all attempts to find out something about them a priori through concepts that would extend our cognition have, on this presupposition, come to nothing. Hence let us once try whether we do not get farther with the problems of metaphysics by assuming that the objects must conform to our cognition... then I do not see how we can know anything of them a priori; but if the object conforms to the constitution of our faculty of intuition, then I can very well represent this possibility to myself.¹¹

Kant explains that his reversal is similar to the way Copernicus, who confronted with celestial evidence that contradicted the prominent and commonsense view, had to approach the theory from an entirely new perspective. In order to understand his observations, Copernicus had to consider that what had seemed apparent before, that the sun revolved around the earth and that the earth was the center of the universe, was false as it seemed contrary to his calculations. In other words, Copernicus had to rethink the

¹⁰ For a discussion on ‘the usual concept of truth’ see Heidegger’s “*On the Essence of Truth*”. Where he discusses the ancient and medieval notion of truth as correspondence of intellect to thing.

¹¹ Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, B xvi, xvii.

data from a completely and what seemed a nonsensical point of view, revolutionary standpoint from what had been previously thought to be known. Copernicus had to imagine and apply a hypothetical model, a conceptual form, in Kantian language, to the observed data in order to understand that the earth was moving around the sun and spinning on its axis.¹² Because little had been achieved in the way of securing legitimacy to metaphysics, Kant was impelled to seek a solution via this sort of perspective reversal. Kant conceives of his project as beginning with a similar reversal of what can be considered as a rejection of the common sense view of object to subject relations. His Copernican revolution begins by stating that objects are to now be understood in light of conforming to our mode of cognition. This is a rejection of the old common sense realism and a strong move toward an idealist understanding of the object though with perhaps some significant qualification. For Kant this means then that the subject is responsible for constituting the objects, that the subject takes an active role in its forming concepts. This suggestion is significant as it allows Kant to assert the possibility of synthetic *a priori* concepts. Concepts have *a priori* content in that they are not determined on the part of experience, but stem from supposed transcendental categories in the mind. If these Transcendental categories exist, then Kant asserts we can have reliable *a priori* knowledge and avoid the pitfall of skepticism. At the same time these ideal concepts are not simply being determined under the dogmatic rational paradigm, but rely on necessary synthetic experience.¹³

¹² Kant, B xvi.

¹³ Gardner, 40- 41, 66.

The mention of transcendental categories of the mind or idealism in Kant leads to a relatively important point regarding Kant that will have an influence on how we are going to understand reification and openness. What is important is how Kantian scholarship has reacted to this issue, specifically as Kant is usually read one of two ways. This distinction is perhaps not only pivotal in how Kant is to be understood, but is essential in understanding the continental and analytical division already mentioned in light of the problem of openness discussed by Bloom.

This difference can again be shown with the approach of what may be considered the problem that Kant wants to solve. With Kant's transcendental idealism, or the transcendental ideality of our mental categories we are confronted with the possible limitations and conditions of our knowing, and hence we are possibly left open to a relativist reading. Kant will try to escape the problem of skepticism by asserting all finite rational beings are subject to these same universal epistemic conditions, allowing one to claim objectivity in spite of our perspectivity.¹⁴

The analytical reading of Kant will focus simply on this aspect of overcoming the skeptical challenge. Kant's undertaking and contribution of explicating the basic structure of experience is interpreted as a path to putting metaphysics on its proper footing: as securing our knowledge claims. In this way the analytic approach emphasizes the object of experience, or the "what" that is to be known. This is to assert the confidence of how metaphysics has been traditionally understood as an explanation as objects as they really exist independent of our sensuous experience. In the context of epistemic skepticism, the analytical interpretation of Kant is valuable in that it provides

¹⁴ Paul Redding, *Continental idealism*, (New York: Routledge 2009).

an account of the structure of experience that avoids skeptical conclusions and retains an account of those particular things we claim to know.¹⁵

Slightly different to this, the idealist, or continental, approach seeks a more fundamental and general account of Kant's project. It does not disagree that Kant was hoping to secure and provide knowledge some legitimacy. But taken in light of the Copernican context, the idealist approach seeks a more fundamental approach to the problem of how knowledge is constituted by the subject. Metaphysics is to be understood as the very structure of experience itself and therefore as a science of what human reason produces:¹⁶

Now metaphysics, according to the concepts we give of it here, is the only one of all the sciences that may promise... For it is nothing but the inventory of all we possess through pure reason, ordered systematically. Nothing here can escape us, because what reason brings forth entirely out of itself cannot be hidden, but is brought to light by reason itself as soon as reason's common principle has been discovered.¹⁷

In the idealist reading, metaphysics should be understood with an emphasis of the very structure of experience itself that is essential in our constituting objects. Reason's common principle, the unity of apperception or human consciousness is the structure for Kant that provides order on our sense experience.

Under the analytical approach the investigation potentially ends as the skeptical challenge has been resolved because the universality of our concepts is the answer to

¹⁵ Gardner, 32.

¹⁶ Gardner, 33.

¹⁷ Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, A xx.

providing legitimate grounds for our knowledge. But the idealist approach is not altogether satisfied with the explanation of the structure of experience, the unity of apperception and its presupposed categories, but as such seeks a more fundamental understanding of how it was that we could have objects represented to us in the first place. In his letter to Herz, written prior to the Critique, Kant was already struggling with the problem of wanting to identify “the ground of the relation *in us* which we call ‘representation’ to the object.”¹⁸ In the old paradigm of relations, the object as “representation” was the external sensuous material that affected the passive mind. For Kant this left unexplained that part of us that could access and thereby make possible an understanding of the sensuous. Under the Leibniz-Wolffian rationalist school, the active component of the mind had been explained in terms of intellection of that which was sensuous. For Leibniz the possibility of all objects of our experience hinged upon understanding the *intellectus archetypi* or the divine cognitions upon which all secondary human cognitions, *intellectus ectypi*, were grounded and made intelligible.¹⁹ In other words, the divine being the source of all reality meant that all objects were idealized in the same way we think of the how the Platonic Forms made appearances intelligible. Accordingly things have their sensuous reality grounded in the intellection of the divine and hence provided a secondary intellectual adequation of objects for us. This “god’s eye view” is important in understanding how Kant distinguishes intellectual intuitions from sensuous intuitions by explaining that the active side of our intellect is as important as the role of the sensual world plays in providing material. Kant expresses it later as “Leibniz

¹⁸ Kant: Letter to Herz, February 1772.

¹⁹ Kant, 1.

intellectualized the appearances, just as Locke totally sensitivized the concepts of understanding.”²⁰

It is in this context that Kant identifies two distinct types of representations. The first types of representations are those empirical *a posteriori* experiences of the world that we are receptive to, or what he refers to as sense intuitions. Sense intuitions are those objects of immediate experience that are given to us that we experience every day. The second type of representation is that part we contribute. They are *a priori* concepts which are the means that allow us to think about the objects or sense intuitions given to us. Kant describes the relation between sense intuitions and concepts as the minds receptivity of the representations of sense matter and the other, our cognizing about them as spontaneously arising concepts. Accordingly the duality concepts and intuitions form the basis for our ability to think. Matter supplies the possibility for sensuous input while the mind supplies the form or concepts on the part of our faculty of understanding. Both are conditions for the possibility of any knowledge according to Kant.²¹

This distinction between the sensuous and the intellectual not only paves the way for his sense intuitions and concepts as two forms of representation, but his reliance on maintaining the validity of that part of us where representations are formed. This shows respect for the rationalist position. The notion of the divine or *intellectus archetypi* as that ground upon which all sense intuitions are possible, so too are the representations provided by the faculty of understanding. This is important to Kant in light of the empiricists who had simply sensualized all representations. Legitimate knowledge

²⁰ Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, A271/B327, 372.

²¹ Kant, A50-51, 193.

claims would require an *a priori* rational basis. This dual notion of representations provided a new combinational understanding of subject-object constitution. The unity of apperception or consciousness, that being the faculties of the understanding, imagination and reason, worked together to provide a generalized *a priori* form/representation to the sensuous. It was no longer understood that the object was the sole cause of our representation, but our consciousness acted harmoniously in such a way to also productive in the representation. Therefore we had two distinct types of representation; sense intuitions and forms.²²

Because of this twofold sense of representation, Kant then refers to those sense intuitions as the appearances of things, rather than the way they are, in-and-of-themselves. Only the divine intellect is able to have a completely intellectual intuition apart from the sensual material and therefore has access to the things as they are, while we are provided with categories that allow the possibility of appearances. Kant will refer to this as his phenomena and noumena distinction.²³ But what is essential is the role of the understanding which provides the generalized form for the sense material we receive from the external world; the appearances that we are presented with are phenomenal only. That is not to suggest that for Kant phenomenal content simply interpretive. Kant is asserting that that a universality to the forms so that they are reliable. But he is also suggesting that we do not have access to things in themselves, but that our relationship to the world is mediated by our faculty of the imagination. “For pure reason leaves to the

²² Gilles Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy*, Trans. H. Tomlinson and B. Habberjam. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 16, 22-23.

²³ Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, A235/B294, 338.

understanding everything that relates directly to objects of intuition or rather to their synthesis in imagination.”²⁴

Thus far we have left out a fundamental portion of our examination as it bears relevance to reification, that being the problem of the speculative interest of reason. The answer to this lies in Kant’s chapter on the Transcendental Dialectic and focuses specifically on the illegitimate uses of reason.²⁵ After the preceding with an Aesthetic and Analytic account of the conditions for the possibility of experience, Kant turns to the examination of reason and the illusions produced by it. But to understand the faculty of Reason, we need to identify the other faculties that it is relative to. We have already alluded to what Kant refers to as the unity of apperception or human consciousness. This is the locus where these faculties are unified. According to Kant there are three, the understanding, the imagination, and reason.²⁶

The Understanding, we’ve already pointed out, operatively provides categorical form to the sensuous content we are given in experience. The primary active function of the understanding is to legislate or judge that which is accomplished by providing conformity of experience to the *a priori* generalized categories of the mind. However this faculty does not act alone, the imagination is the faculty that allows appearances to be synthesized. We are referring to the dualistic account of representations in terms of *a posteriori* sense intuition and of those *a priori* forms on the part of the understanding. In

²⁴ Kant, A326/B383, 401.

²⁵ Kant, A293/B249, 384.

²⁶ Deleuze identifies these three faculties in their essential relation. The interaction of the three and problems associated with their illegitimate use is extended to page 25. Also: see Kant’s Transcendental deduction, CPR B134.

seeking a solution to unifying these two types of representations, Kant begins by identifying two types of judgments, analytic and synthetic. Analytic judgments defined as instances when the predicate is contained within the concept itself. In this sense analytic judgments are tautological and can be considered *a priori* as they can be understood without appeal to experience. In distinction a synthetic judgment the concept does not contain the predicate, but is additional and connected to the concept. As such these judgments are the sort that came from experience or *a posteriori*.²⁷ Kant desires to claim that synthetic *a priori* judgments are the only sort of judgments that have the certainty required for knowledge claims about the world and are at the same time ampliative. Kant identifies mathematical and geometric judgments as synthetic *a priori* judgments. They are both knowable *a priori* and *a posteriori*. By extension Kant will explain the possibility of *a priori* synthetic judgments by asserting the pure *a priori* forms of space and time. Space and time as pure forms provide the conditions for the possibility of for these synthetic *a priori* judgments as well as all of human sensibility:²⁸

If I therefore ascribe a synopsis to sense, because it contains a manifold in its intuition, a synthesis must always correspond to this, and receptivity can make cognitions possible only if combined with spontaneity. This is now the ground of a threefold synthesis, which is necessarily found in all cognition: that, namely, of the apprehension of the representations, as modifications of the mind in intuition: of the reproduction of them in the imagination; and of their recognition in the concept. Now these direct us

²⁷ Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, A7/B11, 141.

²⁸ Kant: A10/B14, 143.

toward three subjective sources of cognition, which make possible even the understanding and, through the latter, all experience as an empirical product of understanding.²⁹ It is the imagination that is the mediator that synthesizes both the apprehension of sensuous representations and our reproduction in terms of space and time as conditional of its representative possibility.³⁰ If we are defining the understanding generally in terms of its legislative role, the imagination for Kant is responsible for providing the schema that allows the understanding to judge.³¹ Just as Kant indicates “Pure Reason leaves everything to the understanding – the understanding alone applying immediately to the objects of intuition, or rather to their synthesis in the imagination”³² Understood in this way the imagination is the mediating faculty that navigates its synthesis on the conditions of space and time that provides a schema for the understanding to operate. But what of reason, how are we to understand its function according to Kant?

We might recall that Kant has already indicated that reason’s problem is that it often exceeds its limitations. In one of the most interesting metaphors Kant demonstrates reason’s interest:

Encouraged by such proof of the power of reason, the drive for expansion sees no bounds. The light dove, in free flight cutting through the air the resistance it feels, could get the idea that it could do better in airless space. Likewise, Plato abandoned the world of the senses because it posed so many hindrances for the understanding, and dared to go beyond it on the winds of ideas, in the empty

²⁹ Kant, A97, 228.

³⁰ Deleuze, *Kant’s Critical Philosophy*, 15.

³¹ Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, A140/B179, 273.

³² Kant, A326/B383-4, 401.

space of pure understanding. He did not notice that he made no headway by his efforts, for he had no resistance, no support, as it were, by which he could stiffen himself, and to which he could apply his powers in order to get his understanding off the ground.³³

Taking his cue from Aristotle, Kant views reason in terms of syllogistic construction.³⁴ Given the *a priori* concepts provided by the understanding, reason looks for a middle conditioning term. But in the case of transcendental concepts, no term can be provided apart from experience. In the desire to attain certainty apart from such experience, reason must postulate beyond itself a conditioning term. We might say that in its hubris, Reason is seduced by its own desire that it posits transcendental ideas. “Reason arrives at knowledge by means of acts of the understanding which constitute a series of conditions.”³⁵ Ultimately reason in its transcendental employment, seeks the full extension and totality of its concept such that it desires the end of the conditioned series. In other words, the transcendental ideas are an attempt to seek the unconditioned of that series, lest it fall into the absurdity of infinite regress. It is in the Dialectic that Kant identifies three such instances; God, the soul and the world. To be clear, the question is not whether such entities exist, but the legitimacy of reaching such ideas through reason is at question. This, for Kant, is where Reason oversteps its bounds in that same Platonic posit of intellectual Forms beyond experience. This he refers to as the

³³ Kant, A5/B9, 129.

³⁴ Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy*, 18

³⁵ Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, A330/B387, 403.

transcendental illusion. Three transcendental ideas that are beyond reasons legitimate ability to produce.³⁶

But this transcendental illusion is simply the paragon of examples where reason is motivated to posit unconditioned ideas so that its own syllogistic need is satisfied. There are two abstract principles in how Kant will think about illegitimate transcendental uses of reason that are that are common to all experience.³⁷ In the first misuse of reason we are only accorded general knowledge apart from sensations. According to the Transcendental Analytic, the “understanding can never accomplish *a priori* anything more than to anticipate the form of a possible experience in general, and, since that which is not appearance cannot be an object of experience, it can never overstep the limits of sensibility, within which alone objects are given to us.”³⁸

Just as reason seeks the ultimate end of a series, it also is tempted to posit the thing in itself as the condition for a particular instance of knowledge. This access to the thing itself is a reference to the noumena, something that Kant declares we have no legitimate access.³⁹ The argument is not whether this conditional, the object itself, exists in so much as we have already asserted that it is the source that provides content for sensuous experience, but that it is an illusion of reason that makes us think we have direct access. A second transcendent mis-use of reason ends with the same result as the first in

³⁶ Deleuze, 19.

³⁷ Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason* B304, 359.

³⁸ Kant, A247, 358.

³⁹ Kant, B310, 362.

that it supposes that it has knowledge of the thing itself. Reason transcends its ability by claiming to have determinate knowledge of a thing as it corresponds to the Idea. Reason supposes that an object must exist in itself in its corresponding to the transcendental categories. Again the faculty is easily motivated into supposing it has a claim to knowing the object in and of itself.⁴⁰ Kant indicates that hypostasis occurs in the attempt to capture the thing in itself:

One seeks to give the appearances of having a deeper insight in to the nature of things that the common understanding can have, rest on a mere semblance, according to which one *hypostatizes* what exists merely in thoughts, and - assuming it to be a real object outside of the thinking subject.

And again,

...we *hypostatize* outer appearances, no longer relating them to our thinking subject as representations but rather relating them to it in the same quality as they are in us as things external to us and subsisting by themselves...⁴¹

Kant is exposing the two facets of illegitimacy of reason above that are prone to produce illusions which he specifically refers to as the hypostatization of the thing itself. This is related to two conditions that provide the possibility of all experience, space and time. Kant identifies these two transcendental conditions in the human consciousness as an outer sense; space and inner sense; time. The misunderstanding that occurs by way of hypostatization or reification are affected by the conditions of our inner (time) and outer sense (space), each having its correlate. First, the transcendental use of hypostatizing the thing in itself via an internal illusion of generalized knowledge that is prompted by the

⁴⁰ Kant gives a clear account of this in his section on the “Transcendental Dialectic, Transcendental Illusion”, page 384 and again in A795/B823, 672.

⁴¹ Kant, A385-386, 434.

categories and the second, external transcendent hypostatization of determinate knowledge of the thing itself.

It is no mistake that in our use of Kant that we should end with the moment of hypostatization. Identifying this over-statization is the main relevance of Kant's contribution to the notion of reification, its relatable term. Kant's articulation and identification of the roles that make up human consciousness, the understanding, the imagination and reason, provide ample explanation for the occurrence of reification starting with our need or drive to ask questions and seek the metaphysical, where reason additionally encourages not only our will, but by its very principle 'desires' the unconditioned of its logic.⁴²

Summary

Kant's concern is not the dismissal of metaphysics. Kant rejects both Humean skepticism and what he claims to be dogmatic positing of the rationalist schools. Kant clearly wants a firm footing, or at least an honest telling of what is accomplishable, for human reason. Kant's assertion that we as beings are motivated, that it is a part of our nature, to pursue the metaphysical, is to say that regardless of the philosophical arguments and problems that might arise, we have and will always be in pursuit of the metaphysical in spite of the controversy that it produces. This is an important point as I am arguing that reification occurs along with this human impetus that Kant rightly identifies. Human beings are driven, not just to know reality, but to push beyond the limits of experience and reason towards those answers whether or not legitimate

⁴² Reason's activity here is to be understood metaphorically as it has no desire itself.

knowledge is possible. This is an essential point in understanding reification, as it is the positing of a reality that by definition is an abstracted-thing that is distinct from the thing itself identified by Kant. The fact that Kant identifies this natural predisposition in human nature as a fact provides, at least momentarily, the grounds for the parallel motive of turning an abstraction into a thing. The clue in Kant at this juncture is that human reason seeks this in its very principle. Our natural interest in understanding reality is so great that we are prone to posit the thing itself, a mistake that lies on the part of our reason. As part of the same process, reification appears to be an illegitimate use of reason, desiring the thing itself.

But in Kant's project it is not enough that he identifies our perpetual proclivity towards the metaphysical. Kant also has a desire to establish metaphysics legitimately in such a way as to avoid skepticism and dogmatic positing. As we've noted it is in his Copernican revolution that we see an innovative solution. This solution of reversing the ancient formula of objects affecting the mind to objects having to conform to the mind is also relevant in understanding reification. The activity of reifying is a cognitive "taking/turning or making"; verbs used to describe how cognitive activity converts the abstraction into a thing. The "thing-hood" of the abstraction is not a reference to the mind creating an object in the external world, such as when we think of the divine creativity *ex nihilo* or creating out of nothing. In the same manner that Kant refers to Leibniz's use of the divine *intellectus archetypi* as providing purely intellectual intuitions, and therefore access to noumena, the thing as it truly is. However it is the human *intellectus ectype* that is dependent on material or sensuous intuitions that provide the content to the forms. The faculty of imagination along with the understanding

synthesizes the conceptual form to the material. While reification is not explicitly shown in Kant's Copernican formulation, it is easy to show its relevancy in explaining how reification is occurring philosophically. In Kant the unity of apperception is understood as the combination of imaginative understanding and categories of human consciousness and is where this entire process of mind and matter combines to produce knowledge. In terms of reification it is the same abstractions on the part of sensuous intuition are then "taken and turned into" thing. This is a problem on both accounts as reification has already been defined as a type of error. Accordingly, in Kant we can understand this error to reify as the mis-taking of appearance *as* the things in themselves.

This is one reason Kant's contribution serves so well in defining the problem of reification, especially as he identifies the part of coming to know which is constituted by the mind. This has already been mentioned as a distinctive turn towards idealism. There are at least two ways in which we might understand this idealism. The first sense can be referred to as a weak version of transcendental idealism in the sense that there is a desire to continue the project of securing some universal notion of objectivity. Kant's account of the transcendental categories of the mind implies that all cognition is subject to the same conditions and could be considered reliable. We have already identified this approach as part of the analytic tradition of interpreting Kant. The second might be referred to as a strong transcendental idealism in that its concern is with the structure of human experience and what can cognitively be produced on the part of reason. The

emphasis here is on human reason, its limitation and how it constitutes experience itself and is therefore more akin to the continental school.⁴³

The point of this difference is to emphasize the particular commitments of this project. Already focused on the continental tradition, we are reading reification in light of a human abstraction being constituted of “making and turning into” a thing. The first sort of weak transcendental idealism is weaker in that it stands against the skeptical claim in attempting to maintain an assertion of grounded scientific objectivity. This is a weak position of idealism, which by its very term suggests that which is composed or known via the intellect. Stronger transcendentalism however comfortably accepts the human side of object constitution and as such de-emphasizes the desire for certainty. In as much as it pursues this, it seeks to delve further into how and in the way the human part of the equation of object constitution is possible. This is easily seen in hermeneutic philosophy which we will examine in detail in the next chapter.

This is pointed out here for the express purposes of not creating a digression on how Kant is to be read and understood, but to point out that one: there are two strong traditions that differ significantly and, second, we are not taking Kant where his project leaves off. The aim of this project is not to defend one view over the other or defend a new view of Kant’s transcendental categories of the mind. Rather the import at hand is to show moments in Kant’s philosophy that have lent and aid in making clear the process of reification. This allows us to dispense with many questions such as, the actual status of transcendental categories and how much objectivity they may or may not lend us.

⁴³ Paul Redding, *Continental Idealism*, 46-47.

Accepting the basic principles of Kant's transcendental idealism in either case does, however, provide a basis for accepting his distinction between appearances and things in themselves. As we've noted he identifies this as phenomena and noumena. As such, noumena is a negative concept in which it is asserted to be completely unavailable to us, but which is important as it provides appearances, the representations of sensuous intuition. These sense intuitions are the matter by which abstractions are produced on the part of the synthesizing imagination and legislate to categorical forms. This phenomena or abstractions are that which can become reified. To the extent human consciousness seeks the thing itself, so will it mis-take its abstraction for a thing.

Reason and its illegitimate uses not only serve as the coup de grace in defining the mistaking error of reification, but define its process of statization. In Kant's critique we see the motive for reification in the motive for wanting to have the thing in itself. The Copernican revolution explains nicely the matter of the creative activity of the imagination, the legislative understanding and the desire of reason as it affects our experience. We can easily see how human consciousness is involved directly in the turning abstractions into things, or "taken" as the things themselves under the faculty of understanding. This idealist move in Kant paves the way for a type of phenomenology, though Kant may have not thought of phenomena as so interpretive. We are now ready to see how Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology further demonstrates the reality of reification.

CHAPTER FOUR

HEIDEGGER

For manifestly you have long been aware of what you mean when you use the expression “being.” We, however, who used to think we understood it, have now become perplexed.¹

Similar to the problems that prompted Kant to seek the fundamental questions concerning the possibility of metaphysics, Martin Heidegger sought a fundamental re-questioning of the meaning of Being, the categorical manifold sense introduced by Aristotle in his metaphysics that predicated its use regarding reference to any specific instance of ‘beings’ or entities.² Kant’s innovation was a reversal of the ancient formula of entities as causing/producing representations in the mind to suggesting that the entities instead conformed to the mind, this being his Copernican revolution. Heidegger’s entire approach to philosophy is affected by an early introduction to Franz Brentano’s dissertation, “On the Manifold Meaning of Being according to Aristotle,” and the problems introduced there in.³ Aside from Brentano, Heidegger realized that any account

¹ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Macquarrie and Robinson, (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1962), Heidegger’s translation of Plato’s *Sophist*, 244 a page 1.

² It will be helpful to note that Heidegger in discussion the manifold sense of Being, the category, is distinguished by capitalization in distinction from the specific type of ‘being’ that entities have.

³ David Farrell Krell, *Martin Heidegger, Basic Writings*, (San Francisco: Harper and Collins, 1993), 3.

of the question of being must be informed by the retrieval or revival of Aristotle's original concern with the subject. "The Following question concerned me in quite a vague manner: If being [Seiende] is predicated with manifold significance, then what is its leading, fundamental signification? What does Being [Sein] mean?"⁴

Similar to Kant, Heidegger asks fundamental questions regarding Being in its most general sense and its import in our understanding metaphysics in terms of ontology. For the remainder of the chapter there will note two types of Being we are referring too. Any capitalized notion of "Being" is to be understood as that general categorical notion, while "being" in small case is the being of entities, persons or objects encountered in the world.

It is through this lens, the problem of Being, that we come explicitly to the question of reification through the very work of Heidegger. In this chapter I will briefly summarize Heidegger's project in light of his fundamental examination of the manifold sense of Being, with concentration on specific elements as they relate to and amplify an understanding of reification. However it is noteworthy to suggest that for Heidegger the very positive content of understanding Being, prompts the problem of reification of which he seemed quite aware. In his preparatory analysis to *Being and Time*, his seminal work, Heidegger speaks early of the problem of "reification of consciousness"⁵ as "The Thinghood itself which such reification implies must have its ontological origin

⁴ Martin Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, trans. Joan Stambaugh, (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), 74.

⁵ This is most likely a reference to Lukacs' *The History of Class Consciousness* which came out in 1923, several prior to Heidegger's *Being and Time*.

demonstrated if we are to be in a position to ask what we are to understand positively when we think of the unreified.”⁶ The sense of Being that Heidegger seeks to examine is that ‘which stands under’, the meta – of physics, and makes possible any reification of Being, or static concepts. Heidegger’s examination is concerned with exposing the way in which Being becomes meaningful. That is to say that Heidegger is not so concerned with the problem of reification as he is with an analysis of “Being.” The problem of Being, how it becomes meaningful, is a primary issue only after which one may, in a secondary sense, ask about reified being. This becomes even more apparent when after much considerable effort in explicating the problem of Being in his work and its implications, Heidegger ends his text with another reformulation of our issue.

“It has long been known that ancient ontology works with ‘Thing-concepts’ and that there is a danger of ‘reifying consciousness’. But what does this “reifying” signify? Where does it arise? Why does Being get ‘conceived’ ‘proximally’ in terms of the present-at-hand *and not* in terms of the ready-to hand, which indeed lies *closer* to us? Why does this reifying always keep coming back to exercise its dominion?”⁷

Heidegger’s work is clearly not engaging in or answering the problem of reification. But reification is clearly a framework that concerns his investigation as the very phenomenon of reified consciousness that is suggestive to how “Being” and our relationship to it is essential. I will begin by introducing his project and key themes that will show how his articulation of his inquiry into Being sheds light on the problem and function of reification. Consequently, in my examination of Heidegger’s contribution, I

⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 1962, 72.

⁷ Heidegger, 487.

will clarify the manner of reification in such a way that, openness and closedness will be exposed as essential to understanding the issue itself.

The inquiry then begins more formally with Heidegger's project as a whole asking how and why it is that he is invoking a notion of "Being" in the first place and where this leads. As already suggested, Heidegger is motivated by research, both ancient, primarily Aristotle, and the more contemporary problematization of Being articulated by Brentano, who indicated that 'Being', the most fundamental category of metaphysics, has been neglected specifically as it concerns its field of inquiry: *metaphysica generalis* or ontology.⁸ In the same manner that Kant attempted to lay forth a ground work for metaphysics, Heidegger desires to inquire into the inherent vagueness in the very concept of Being.⁹ This is to suggest that the scholastic and modern tradition, according to Heidegger, has either taken a vague concept of Being for granted, or that the concept has never been thought rigorously through, after Aristotle's initial articulation of the differing meanings of Being. Kant, in his critique, begins to ask about the limitations of human beings' ability to secure an adequate ground for metaphysics as well as attempting to lay a foundational concept for Reason. For Heidegger all this is taken as a cue to ask the question that has not been asked for some time: What is understood by "Being" that is prior to any attempt at laying bare the grounds of human knowing as a more primordial issue.¹⁰

⁸ Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. Richard Taft, (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1990), 6.

⁹ Heidegger, 1-6.

¹⁰ Heidegger, 2.

In his seminal work *Being and Time*, Heidegger begins by declaring that Being has been thought to be “the most universal and emptiest of concepts. As such it resists every attempt at definition.” In fact, Heidegger thinks that a certain sort of dogma has arisen in the acceptance of such a lack or inability to define Being adequately, that to ask this fundamental question one is often “charged with an error of method.”¹¹ It is with this lack of clarity and result that Heidegger is impelled to pursue the question, to make an understanding of Being explicit, perhaps in the same spirit that we note in Kant’s desire to investigate and lay bare the limits of reason. In the case with Heidegger, he notes three important historical suppositions regarding how Being has been understood and as such leads to what he asserts as a forgetting of the question itself. The three assertions by Heidegger include translations in quotes either from Greek or Latin and are as follows:

1. First, it has been maintained that Being is the most universal concept: ‘An understanding of Being is already included in conceiving anything which one apprehends in entities.
2. It has been maintained secondly that the concept of ‘Being’ is indefinable. This is deduced from its supreme universality, and rightly so, if ‘Being cannot indeed be conceived as an entity.
3. Thirdly it is held that ‘Being’ is of all concepts the one that is self evident. Whenever one cognizes anything or makes an assertion, whenever one comports oneself toward entities, even one self, some use is made of ‘Being.’¹²

Not only is it important to give credence to the history that has obscured the question of Being according to Heidegger, but in the assertions we recognize that it has been indeed a problem to define and helps us understand Heidegger’s essential starting

¹¹ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 1962, 2.

¹² Heidegger, 22-23.

point when he declares: “every inquiry is a seeking (concern – suchen). Every seeking gets guided before hand by what it sought. Inquiry is a cognizant seeking for an entity both with regard to the fact *that it is* and with regard to its Being *as it is*.”¹³

This means that the any field of inquiry will presuppose an implicit understanding of Being that makes its investigation possible. There is no better example of this problem than expressed by Plato’s *Meno*:

Meno: And how will you enquire, Socrates, into that which you do not know? What will you put forth as the subject of enquiry? And if you find what you want, how will you ever know that this is the thing which you did not know?

Socrates: I know, Meno, what you mean; but just see what a tiresome dispute you are introducing. You argue that a man cannot enquire either about that which he does not know; for if he knows, he has no need to enquire; and if not, he cannot; for he does not know the very subject about which he is to enquire.¹⁴

It is this “tiresome dispute” that points to the problem that Heidegger wishes to take up in the way any inquiry must take up an understanding of Being in order to have an investigation. Every inquiry is a seeking and as such is guided by some content of what is sought.

In his reflective rigor Heidegger makes perhaps what might be his own sort of Copernican revolution. Rather than looking for an externalized definition of “Being” given its vagueness, he comes to an essential insight: we are the type of beings that are concerned with such an investigation. That is, it is only our being that is asking and seeking meaning to the question in the first place. Seemingly we are the only being that asks such a question and as such we are, even as indicated by Kant, beings that are to be

¹³ Heidegger, 24.

¹⁴ Plato, *The Meno, The Great Books vol. 7*. (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952), 179.

understood as always involved and in pursuit of the metaphysical regardless of its rigor or demonstrability. This has a profound consequence for how Heidegger is going to concentrate, not on “Being” itself so much, but he will turn his focus on the user, the being who is concerned with the question, the locus of its concern. Heidegger’s examination is now rightly understood as concerned with the existence of man and is therefore referred to as an existential analytic¹⁵ of the kind of being and how this being uses and has an invested interest in pursuing an understanding “Being.” Essentially, that Being cannot be examined without first considering that its origin of reference is always a human asking. As with Kant, we have no access to the things themselves, but that they are mediated by concepts. With Heidegger we recognize that this Kantian understanding is fundamental in pursuit of making clear how we are to understand Being. But in a reflexive moment, Heidegger turns the question back on to the questioner, realizing that the question, the seeking is itself a unique point of origin. Any attempt at answering the question of Being then will always have as its locus, an understanding that will have a distinct human interest/character/signature. Heidegger famously uses a German idiom to express this particular characterization of the kind of being who asks the question about Being in general as Dasein or Da-sein, translated as “there-being”. That is a being that is in time, not eternal, but finite, located in a particular right “there - da” moment.¹⁶

¹⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 1962, 151. Heidegger uses this term on many occasions to indicate the particular type of inquiry in order to distinguish it from other less rigorous examinations.

¹⁶ Heidegger, 32. For operational and functional clarity we might avoid any reason that to keep Dasein as distinct from simply meaning “human being.” The point being that there is much scholarship and reason behind this, but does not suit this present task. It is accurate to say that human existence is a Dasein.

What is then distinctive about Dasein according to Heidegger is that it already brings ontology with it. He is clear in saying that having ontology or an understanding of Being is what it means to be Dasein. But in distinction, Heidegger does not mean to say we all have a worked out field of beings called “ontology”, but if you will, a pre-ontological conception of being that makes inquiry possible. Heidegger is pointing out that prior to an explicit ontology, we are constituted with a pre-ontology. One can determine the nature of the entities in their Being without necessarily having the explicit concept of the meaning of Being at one’s disposal.¹⁷

Dasein in seeking is guided by its content is tantamount to saying that an ontology is presupposed by the inquirer, Dasein itself. If we are speaking about an explicit notion of worked out ontology, a field of investigation such as a particular science, the field is already laid out in terms of its basic guiding concepts, necessarily as determinative limits to what is to be sought. In a pre-Kuhnian moment,¹⁸ Heidegger suggests that it is only when a crisis occurs in a particular field of thought do the basic concepts come under question and are then perhaps reformulated. In this way, we are to understand basic concepts as those grounding, foundational concepts that set the conditions for the possibility for the investigation. In other words, an ontological priority is “always already” present in one’s seeking. A pre-ontological is required to set the conditions for

¹⁷ Heidegger, 27.

¹⁸ Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, (Chicago: University Chicago Press, 1996), 19. Kuhn thesis is that the nature of scientific revolutions in thought comes about only when a crisis of basic concepts becomes inadequate for explanation. This results in a paradigm shift that generates new insight and changes the basic understanding of the field in question.

the possibility of an explicit ontological investigation. If Being is indeed such a vague and abstract, even tiresome notion, it is important if we wish to provide explicit ontology.¹⁹

However this vague notion of Being is what propels the theme of Heidegger's investigation. The desire to examine and show a rigorous conception of Being, results in his desire to lay bare an examination of that being, Dasein. While this attempt to expose the ground will result in the necessary examination of Dasein, Heidegger rightly asserts:

Basically all ontology, no matter how rich and firmly compacted a system of categories it has as its disposal, remains blind and perverted from its own most aim, if it's has not first adequately clarified the meaning of Being, and conceived this clarification as its fundamental task.²⁰

This is a way of prompting that, while there is a necessity of ontology bringing its own set of concepts, the fact remains that such an examination to be clear and rigorous must expose its very foundational assumptions. This is what Heidegger means when he speaks of "laying bare the ground." There is only one being whose type of existence has as its concern the specific task of asking about the meaning of Being, whether in its most general and abstract sense, or in more specified ontological explanations or fields of inquiry, or in daily living. It is Dasein that Heidegger rightly identifies as that being which brings an ontology with it. In this way Heidegger declares that "Dasein is ontically distinctive in that it is ontological"²¹ By introducing this the term ontic,

¹⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 1962, 29-31.

²⁰ Heidegger, 31.

²¹ Heidegger, 32.

Heidegger is pointing out that Dasein is the type of being, its mode, that ‘operationally’ brings an understanding of the world, “always already” with it. To say that Dasein is ontical is to say that its mode of being is constituted as bringing with it a particular understanding of history and tradition, hence an articulation of Being, or as sometimes in terms of its totality, Dasein brings with it a world.²²

Implications of Dasein’s type of being

This approach to Heidegger’s investigation reveals four important elements to regarding Dasein. First, Dasein’s or human being²³ is a type of being whose fundamental characteristic can be described as a being as existing. Dasein already mentioned is that an analysis of the being that brings about ontologies or worlds with it. Therefore, Heidegger considers the examination of Dasein as an analytic that is *existentia*’ in scope. Reminiscent of Shakespeare’s Hamlet’s famous line, “To be or not to be” ontically implies that “dasein always understands itself in terms of its existence – in terms of a possibility of itself: to be itself or not to be itself.”²⁴ An examination of a being whose existence is ontical, one that is already bringing or having an understanding of the world, then has fundamental importance in understanding how existence constitutes this type of being.

²²Heidegger gives an extended account of Dasein’s world-hood starting on page 91.

²³ Heidegger is particular about maintaining human being as an instance of Dasein, but likes to keep this category general enough to concentrate on this examination not being anthological. We however might here stipulate the interchange as to make this inquiry specific to Humanity. Thus we will conflate the two terms, human beings with Dasein.

²⁴ Heidegger, 33.

Secondly, Dasein's existence is understood as a mode of being implying *temporality*. This is a being in time, one that is also understood as whose constitution is a *historicality*; having a history, tradition and culture from whence it comes and the ability to reflect back on itself and history as well as projects its possibilities into the future. "Dasein has grown up into and in a traditional way of interpreting itself" and as such, this history can be explicitly studied and preserved in a tradition.²⁵ Heidegger's seminal work entitled *Being and Time*, might be rightly understood as being *is time*.²⁶

Thirdly, Dasein, or human existence, in bringing its ontologies with it, suggests that its being is ontically *hermeneutic* in constitution. Perhaps what might seem apparent here is not to be confused with a traditional conception of hermeneutics, which would see a doctrine involving how we may decide to employ interpretations of the world. Rather Heidegger means to point out the more fundamental and primordial necessity of our existence being possibilized by interpreting. "In hermeneutics what is developed for Dasein is a possibility of its becoming and being for itself in the manner of an understanding of itself."²⁷ Similarly, in the way Kant describes space and time as conditions for the possibility of any experience, so too Heidegger points out that understanding Dasein's essential constitution is to understand Dasein as a unity of actualizing the entities that are seen and grasped, and hence are communicated or expressed in terms of concepts.

²⁵ Heidegger, 41.

²⁶ Heidegger, 40.

²⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Ontology - The Hermeneutics of Facticity*, trans. J. Van Buren. (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1999), 11.

A “*concept*” is not a schema but rather a possibility of being, of how matters look in the moment [*des augenblicks*], i.e., is constitutive of the moment – a meaning drawn out of something – points to a *forehaving*, i.e., transports us into a fundamental experience – points to a *foreconception*, i.e., calls for a how of addressing and interrogating – i.e., transports us into the *being there of our Dasein* in accord with its tendency to interpretation and its worry. Fundamental concepts are not later additions to Dasein, but rather ex-pressing it in advance and propel it forward: grasping Dasein and stirring it by way of their pointing.²⁸

The important point to understand in Heidegger regarding the essence of hermeneutic constitution of Dasein is to not confuse interpretation as a simply methodological approach. As something we employ among other possibilities in coming to objects. Hermeneutics is the condition of our relating. From the very first moment, we are enmeshed in the process of interpreting, making sense of our world.

Fourthly, Heidegger means to employ a method and to make special significance to an examination of Dasein itself. He will call his investigation a *phenomenology*. Understanding this, we might take a cue from that of his mentor, Edmund Husserl, who specifically used the term as a method as a way of getting back to the “things themselves” suggesting that the tradition had lost its way. Certainly Kant had posed the problem in accessing noumena, or the thing itself, but his suggestion that the phenomenal appearances along with the transcendental categories of his philosophy provided much emphasis on the possibility of still attaining a solid ground for knowledge. Husserl’s “Cartesian meditations,” was an attempt to revive a rigorous concept of philosophy in terms of a transcendental phenomenology – “a neo-cartesianism”²⁹ was to be influential on his student, the young Heidegger. Even though phenomenology as a method was

²⁸ Heidegger, 12-13.

²⁹ Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: an Introduction to Phenomenology*, trans. Dorion Cairns, (Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1960), 1.

employed by both Husserl and Heidegger, what was to be understood as a getting back to the things themselves was radically different. Perhaps it is suggestively plain that Husserl was attempting to secure philosophy as a science, grounded in the very way we noted the two ways one might approach Kant's attempt at the same project. It is this difference that becomes essential in understanding one of the most pivotal moments in the divide between what has become coined as the analytic orientation and the continental. For Heidegger, phenomenology would not be so grand a project, but would instead indicate phenomenology as the study understood as that which appears to consciousness, and in the most primordial way in which this "presencing" of being was hermeneutically conditioned.³⁰

As we've already indicated, "the things themselves" as an ontology had begged the prior notion of how Being is to be understood and drove Heidegger towards examining the unexamined life of Being that the tradition had not. In his desire for conceptual transparency Heidegger understands phenomena "as that which appears," or "is made manifest,"³¹ things as they show themselves to be or as "present-to-hand." Additionally Heidegger purposely identifies the concept of logos in the suffix of the term phenomen-ology as discourse. As such a discourse is an articulation or an assertion of being in language. This means that any interaction with phenomenon is to be understood in Being's most original sense as having a historical content that is brought with the

³⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 1962, 49. Heidegger gives an elaborate account of what he means by phenomenological method.

³¹ Heidegger, 50-51.

things in things becoming present, a “letting themselves be shown.”³² As we’ve indicated, phenomenology is the appropriate method to an inquiry of Being. The inquirer is the type of being that is concerned, invested with and is always already has a historical situatedness, an articulated understanding of Being, that sets the conditions for the possibility for things to appear AS thing-values to consciousness. The term descriptive phenomenology then for Heidegger is somewhat redundant because it is

The character of this description itself, the specific meaning of the logos, can be established first of all in terms of the thing-hood... of what is to be ‘described’ – that is to say, of what is to be given scientific definiteness as we encounter it phenomenally.³³

Dasein’s world

To fully appreciate the relevance of Dasein in respect to the phenomenon of reification we need to highlight several of its characteristics, some of which have already been mentioned. First, Dasein is that kind of entity that brings with it a set of pre-understandings or world-hood and therefore brings with it a certain totality of “Being.” We have already attempted to show that Heidegger understands that this having a world provides the conditions for Dasein to engage and interact meaningfully with “things” or their existence in order that they can “appear” in particular themes. Heidegger describes this pre-having as being attuned or attunement.

This does not mean that we receive information about something, about some eventuality that would otherwise have remained unknown to us. On the contrary, Dasein sets us ourselves before beings as a whole. In attunement precisely makes beings as a

³² Heidegger, 52-53.

³³ Heidegger, 59.

whole manifest and makes us manifest to ourselves as disposed in the midst of these beings.³⁴

Heidegger will call this attunement as Dasein having “world-hood.” Not only are considered things, the appearances of which come in certain terms, but they do so as a result of the total ontological discourse, the articulation of being that is necessarily *a priori*.³⁵ As such, Dasein’s Being in-the-world or having world-hood means that it is an entity that is also alongside, dwelling with other beings. Dasein is a being that Heidegger refers to as an existence that is involved with Being in their determinate sense, beings that are appear as “present-to-hand.”³⁶

But this way of existing is generally not the type of explicit awareness of the type of examination Heidegger or we are now making explicit. Rather Dasein’s existence is one of daily living and going about one’s business without consideration of how Being is understood. Dasein in every singular sense brings its own ontology as part of what it means to bring a cultural set of values and perspectives with it and this is what Heidegger means by having a world.³⁷ Beyond the constitutive analysis, Heidegger understands that to understand Dasein as existing is to examine the ‘how’ of its existence. To elaborate on

³⁴ Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, trans. W. McNeill and N. Walker, (Indiana: Indiana Univ. Press, 1995), 283.

³⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 1962, 79.

³⁶ Heidegger, 79. The concept “present-at-hand” will be defined and its relevance elaborated on later in this chapter.

³⁷ Again we are equating Dasein with Human singularity here. We think of every human as unique and original in some sense, so then does the Dasein of that individual. We might point out the analytical import to identifying “da-sein” as a type of being and note that equivocation with human being was something Heidegger wish to avoid thus preserving clarity in his analysis.

this how Dasein exists, Heidegger will refer to man as having an “ek-sistence,” a standing forth in the world. As such he refers to this temporal “ek-stasis” of Dasein as its *being-in-the-world*. “Being-in-the-world designates the essence of ek-sistence with regard to the cleared dimension out of which the “ek-“ of ek-sistence essentially unfolds.”³⁸ The temporal implications point out that Da-sein’s being as one as ek-static is to reinforce the Da or Da-sein. Man as standing forth in the world is a being that is not simply static, but ek-static. We may see implications in terms of man as an being that can be described as one of ek-stasis and how reification as stasis is problematic for a being as ecstatic. There might be other synonymous terms to describe it, such as man as developing, evolving, becoming or life longer learner. But there are other implications of how Heidegger sees the import of this distinction.

Thought in terms of ek-sistence, “world” is in a certain sense precisely “the beyond” within existence and for it. Man is never first and foremost man on the hither side of the world, as a “subject,” whether this is taken as “I” or “We.” Nor is he ever simply a mere subject which always simultaneously is related to objects, so that his essence lies in the subject-object relation. Rather, before all this, man in his essence is ek-sistent into the openness of Being, into the open region that clears the “between” within which a “relation” of a subject to object can “be.”³⁹

Heidegger uses this phrase “ek-sistent into the openness of Being” to indicate that Dasein way of being is ontical, meaning that it is one that is always and already engaged

³⁸ Martin Heidegger, “Letter on Humanism,” *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell, (San Francisco: HaperCollins, 1993), 252.

³⁹ Heidegger, 252.

with other entities, objects and other Daseins. As such this type of existence with all that it includes is not an existence that is a constantly engaged in the kind of descriptive or analytical reflection as we are currently. Rather Heidegger describes our daily existence as being caught up in and involved with things as “*average everydayness*.”⁴⁰ Perhaps a most important feature of our being is that is marked by care or concerns, that directly affect our immediate involvement or relating to the beings of everyday living. This general care that Dasein brings to its living produces a distinct way we are involved with Being.⁴¹ As a being that brings pre-understanding of a World, marked by concern or interest, we relate to things in their phenomenal appearance as a sort of presence. Heidegger calls this “presence-to-hand” to indicate how “entities are grasped in their Being as ‘presence’; this means that they are understood with regard to a definite mode of time – the ‘present.’”⁴² This presencing is to signify the very interpretation to being giving in its immediacy, which the ontology that we bring in our pre-understanding, is a phenomenological “making present” in the most pure sense of letting being appear.⁴³

This everydayness includes or is characterized by a presence-to-things, an immediacy of being that does not necessarily imply that we are, in such a common mode of living, asking in every moment about the ontologies we are bringing forth.

Everydayness is the living without the explicit questioning about its existence. As such

⁴⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 1962, 69.

⁴¹ In *Being and Time*, Heidegger’s discussion of Care as it effects Dasein is taken up in specific analysis, but for an early indication of Things invested with value see page 96.

⁴² Heidegger, 47.

⁴³ Heidegger, 48.

there is a certain “taken for grantedness” that characterizes our being. There are two essential ways that Heidegger will describe this ontic-ontological priority of being as it occurs without our being mindful of it. First, everydayness implies what Heidegger calls the forgetfulness of being.⁴⁴ This is to recall his assertion the fact that the tradition has not dealt with the question of Being and left it ambiguous or empty. This taking the question of Being for granted Heidegger thinks is endemic of Dasein’s existence. Our daily living is commonly unreflective and as such we operate with immediacy to Being. We take things as, bare fact, as if the objects before us have an immediate presence, as though, in Kantian language, we had the “thing itself” at hand. But Heidegger has already claimed that we bring with us an ontology, an understanding of the world, one that is always already constituted with an understanding of being, that is an interpretation. Heidegger calls this aspect of relating somewhat forgetful of what we are providing and its limits, this operatively assumed immediacy as *presence-to-hand*. This term simply serves as a way to specify the casual way that a certain articulation or interpretations of things are imbued with on a daily level. As it were presence-to-hand is a static and mostly implicit concept of which every particular entity is in Dasein’s scope. As such, it doubles as a suggested “thing as such” static reified concept.

With Heidegger’s general project, or those relevant themes laid bare, we can begin to grasp its relevancy toward reification and why Heidegger himself, mentions the issue both at the beginning and the conclusion of his work *Being and Time*.

⁴⁴ Martin Heidegger, “On the Essence of Truth”, *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell, (San Francisco: HaperCollins, 1993), 132. More commonly Heidegger invokes the Greek word *alethia* as the “unforgetting”, see Martin Heidegger’s “The Origin of the Works of Art”, page 176.

Concerning reification

“It has long been known that ancient ontology works with ‘Thing-concepts’ and that there is a danger of ‘reifying consciousness’. But what does this “reifying” signify? Where does it arise?”⁴⁵

With this in mind, we will continue to explain in Heideggerian tones, how we might understand the structure of abstracting, and how reification is a derivative problem of our involvement of everyday Being-in-the-world. Additionally we will keep in mind, that the entire scope of this project is to investigate how these philosophers, and more broadly the continental tradition can inform and enhance our understanding of what an “open-mind” is and its contrary, how closedness occurs. With the hope of success, all such concerns should intentionally be wrapped up in what follows. With the assumption that Kant has some provided a relevant addition in understanding our cognition, the remaining will be a modulated and perhaps refined review of Heidegger’s insights. My own additions, to which this inquiry is aimed, will show how Heidegger’s project sheds light on reification and is especially relevant to understanding the problem of openness and closedness.

Though Heidegger does not specifically define reification, we have already defined the traditional concept as “the turning/making/taking of an abstraction into a thing.” We have added that abstractions are understood as conceptual determinations. Whether it be in terms of a Kantian formulation of transcendental categories of the mind imposing form on the matter of our sense intuitions or in terms of the *a priori* ontology we provide such as a being Dasein signifies, abstractions must be the mental

⁴⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 1962, 487.

comportment of human experience that are “taken and turned into...” These verbs indicating actions that can only be the actions of a human being, whose being, noted by Heidegger, is the kind of being that brings a pre-understanding account of Being and thereby provides the conditions of making present abstraction, or “giving” them thing-hood. In this way it is easy to see how this “taking” and “turning” of a mental abstraction is converted or given a certain sense of “thing-hood” that is implied by reification. In Heideggarian terminology this would be the moment of being appearing as a thematized “thing” or relations of things; larger sets of interpretations. On the level of immediate living, Heidegger coins the phrase for those abstractions as themed things in terms of that which appears “present-at-hand.” This is his way of articulating, naming the kind of involvement we have on the immediate daily moments. To say things are present-at-hand is to suggest the phenomenal immediacy of appearances encountered “take on” characterizations on the part of a being that is looking. Dasein, that kind of being, who brings an always already conception of being. But in terms of everydayness, our daily involvement of being-in-the-world, we go about our living not aware of our “giving” abstractions particular themes or interpretations.⁴⁶

When such abstractions are “made” into things, and that this thing-hood, or presencing occurs, we must pause to consider that in some sense or degree that presencing is a moment of statization. To understand this stasis we might pause for a moment and ask why it is that Heideggarian language relies on idiomatic expressions, whether it be “Dasein” or “Being-in-the-world”, or “present-at-hand.” Part of

⁴⁶ Heidegger, 90 – 106. Heidegger develops an account of world-hood and Dasein’s everydayness.

Heidegger's strategy is to remove the reifying affects of language. Heidegger famously states "that language is the house of Being,"⁴⁷ in order to point out that our very concepts or interpretations become set and statized in a linguistic form. In this sense what is thought and spoken become mutually reinforcing of a statization. It is no wonder that then words themselves are not only indicators of reified concepts, but as referent to concepts themselves, they also have the potential to become reified. In other words, at times a concept may be static, but one may also fixate on a word or phrase itself as indicative of meaning, such as those in political discourse have associated "social justice" as a term as "code words".⁴⁸ Clearly such utterances have statized language to such a degree that they see language being an indicator of set meanings. This means that reification is indeed operating as such. Likewise Heidegger is concerned about why this "reifying consciousness continues to exercise its dominion."⁴⁹ Heidegger's use of language is an attempt to upset the stasis that is occurring conceptually, in trying to invoke us to think beyond the bounded stable categories of how the tradition, or of how our perspective might be seduced into capturing an "essence." In the end, while it may seem frustrating or obscure, Heidegger means to get the reader, outside of his metaphorical box. Perhaps Shakespeare's Hamlet says it best when he declares, "O God, I could be bounded in a nutshell, and count myself a king of infinite space—were it not

⁴⁷ Martin Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism", *Basic Writings*, 1993, 217.

⁴⁸ Steven Benen, "Beck Targets Churches that embrace 'social Justice'", *The Political Animal: The Washington Monthly*, March 9th 2010, <http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/archives/individual/201003/022774.php> (Accessed April 2012).

⁴⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 1962, 487.

that I have bad dreams.”⁵⁰ Heidegger seeks to break convention and stable language in order to break stasis, the domination it has over us, so that we might come to understand things differently or perhaps more deeply.

Furthermore in defining reification in terms of the cognitive stasis of interpretations, we might reflect back on the type of being that is Dasein, the being whose abstractions are being statically held as “present things.” While an initial definition of Dasein has been proffered, showing another way of interpreting and understanding Dasein can illuminate the process of stasis that is occurring. It is by no mistake that Heidegger in his idiomatic use of language refers to Dasein’s as “ek-sisting.” Heidegger is using language to point out the how and the way of Dasein’s ek-sistence should be understood in terms of temporality. Dasein’s existence is itself as an ‘ek-stasis’ or in that we are ecstatic beings.⁵¹ That is a concerned being in time, moving, becoming, in its whole as a being that always already brings a history, such that the present is made manifest in specific terms and also a being that projects itself into the future.⁵² If man is then rightly understood as an ecstatic being then the stasis of abstractions or concepts can certainly be considered problematic. We might venture a question at this point by asking then if there are degrees of stasis. Or is some stasis, and hence reification necessary?

Seeing Dasein as ecstatic beings, we are reminded that reification was understood primarily as a mis-taking. To be sure we’ve indicated that it is a human undertaking, to

⁵⁰ William Shakespeare.” Hamlet: Prince of Denmark,” *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, London: Viking Press 1977), 947.

⁵¹ Martin Heidegger, “Letter on Humanism,” *Basic Writings*, 1993, 230-233.

⁵² Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 1962, 370. Heidegger gives a summary account of the importance of care starting on this page, noting the import of temporality of Dasein.

interpret and give meaning to the objects we encounter. Additionally these objects are not understood as interpreted or imbued with meaning, but can have a kind of presence to the interpreter that they are taken as a Kantian grasping of the thing itself or even in a less explicit sense, simply as a Heideggarian present-to-hand. In either case, both philosopher's terms, the thing itself and present-to-hand, are indications that this kind of "stasis" is a mis-taking of the abstractions for a thing as such. While there are certainly objects before us that make abstracting possible, the mis-taking is the ontological assumption of having them in their complete totality and is a problematic stasis. It seems clear that human hubris in terms of certainty of having the "things themselves" and this assumption is a stasis that is a mis-taking. Heidegger has rightly reminded us of the problem that reifying consciousness seems to keep "exercising its dominion" over us. There does, however, seem to be some justified concern whether or not the stasis of abstractions are unavoidable. After all it is Heidegger who shows us that everyday existence is one of operating constantly with a presencing of things at hand. If reification is something to be avoided, then how is in our abstracting we can avoid it? At this point reification, or at least stasis, seems a necessity in our coming to know, having concepts or interpretive process. How can we understand reification as stasis and yet, it does not become an inevitable problem for human ek-stasis? To understand this problem Heidegger has some other relevant considerations.

In Heideggarian literature it has been quite popular to interpret "Da" as "there," giving this type of "sein" a notion of its spacio-temporality. There are other ways, however, to understand "da". "Das da" in German can be translated, as "the open." So

Dasein itself can be rightly interpreted as “openness”.⁵³ Heidegger has made a case that we are the beings that bring an articulated ontology already, and are therefore the kind of being that brings meaning to the objects we encounter. To understand Dasein as “the open” is to say that it is the locus of where Being or beings become necessarily manifest and “take” on theme. In other words human existence or Dasein as the open place is a way of expressing that ecstatic and essential temporal character of our being. We are the beings that are open to interpreting experience and always in certain ways. As the kind of being that Dasein is in seeking the meaning to such questions, is to say that we are the open place of inquiry, of seeking.⁵⁴ The idea that “consciousness is consciousness of something,” is also a suggestion that consciousness is the open place for Being or beings to take meaning. To say this means that openness is in fact the way to understand how it is, even in a Kantian sense, we bring form to our material experiences. We are the openness. While an open mind generally has been understood as a metaphor describing an activity of the mind, Dasein as openness is really the conditions for the possibility of any knowing or interpreting. Instead of a metaphor, openness is an adjective that modifies our self- understanding. We are the open place, the “there” where meaningful articulation of beings occur or abstractions take or are given meaning.⁵⁵ But this is not

⁵³ Tom Sheehan and Corinne Painter, “Choosing One’s Fate: A Re-Reading of *Sein und Zeit* sec. 74”, *Research in Phenomenology* vol. 29, 1999, 64. Sheehan and Painter stipulate and refer to this interpretation immediately. Heidegger has many texts where he refers to man’s existence in terms of “the open”, or as “openness”.

⁵⁴ Martin Heidegger, “On the Essence of Truth”, *Basic Writings*, 1993, 121 – 123.

⁵⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, 1995, 305. Here Heidegger discusses the conditionality for the possibility of located in logos or discourse. Additionally his essay “On the Essence of Truth”, *Basic Writings* 1993, discusses this

the kind of openness that Bloom is concerned with, where openness means making no discriminations and that all is acceptable. Rather Heidegger's openness must be understood essentially as an openness that is indicative of the type of being man is, to be aware and open to objects taking on meaning. We are that place where such action occurs and is characterized by an always already pre-understanding of Being. The point is akin to Kant's metaphor of the light dove previously referred to. Like the dove, human openness often desires to soar more freely in open space with the promise of little or no resistance. But this is not the case, for human reason or in Heidegger's case, the open place. It is the resistance, or our subjectivity that provides the conditions to being open.

Being then is considered an essential topic for Heidegger's investigation with the additional understanding that Dasein is also essential, as the type of being that is driven toward the investigation itself.⁵⁶ The last essential component is how being is manifest to Dasein in respect to reification. With these aspects of Heidegger's project articulated we now will emphasize an important aspect of how Heidegger thinks of Being's manifestation to Dasein. We've certainly spoken of this in the context of method and hermeneutics and in the way Dasein operates in its everyday world. However we want look at Heidegger's specific theory of disclosure as it pertains to our subject of reification, stasis and closedness.

same theme in terms of Dasein as "the ground of the possibility of correctness" on page 123.

⁵⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 1962, 36.

When we consider the idea of our subjectivity as the place where Being shows up and takes or is given meaning on the part of Dasein, we might accurately consider the above as a significant account of Heidegger's theory of truth. But if we look closely at his account of truth, Heidegger will direct us back to the ancient Greeks and their understanding of truth in what he considers its most primordial sense, which may sound foreign to modern ears. This word Heidegger identifies as indicative in understanding the ancient idea of truth is Aristotle's usage of "*Aletheia*." Here in the context of his understanding of phenomenology he defines it as unconcealedness.

What occurs for the phenomenology of acts of consciousness as a self manifestation of phenomena is thought more originally by Aristotle and in all Greek thinking and existence as aletheia, the unconcealedness of what is present, it's being revealed, its showing itself.⁵⁷

Lethe is a word of Homeric origin as it names the river one must pass over in the afterlife to enter Hades. The river Lethe means literally "forgetting" as an indication of what occurs when at the end of human earthly existence.⁵⁸ In this way, Aristotle takes up in contrast the notion of "a-letheia" as the revealedness or unconcealment of Being that is manifest in its most primordial sense. Likewise Heidegger will use many multiple synonyms to express this essential character of aletheia, such as the "un-hiddenness" of being, the "un-forgetting" and "disclosure." Heidegger's retrieval of this Greek concept of truth is to point out that before we come to understand truth in terms of

⁵⁷ Martin Heidegger, "On Time and Being," *Basic Writings*, 1993, 79.

⁵⁸ The Merriam and Webster dictionary, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/lethe> (accessed, April 22, 2012).

correspondence or of an accord between things or even truth as propositional assertion, the first and most primary sense, Beings in their being, are always already revealed, unconcealed/disclosed as such.⁵⁹

Truth then as the un-concealment of Being, as showing itself, gives special meaning then to the first sentence of *Being and Time* when Heidegger says of Being that “this question today has been forgotten.”⁶⁰ Not only has it been difficult to ask this question or that the tradition has left it largely undefined, but the question of its having been forgotten takes on special significance when understanding Being in terms of *aletheia* as the un-forgetting of Being. In other words it might seem that the primordial sense of Being is often forgotten for the beings that meaningfully appear. In thinking of this unconcealment as revealing of beings as their presencing, Heidegger reminds us that this coming to a presence is also from an absence.⁶¹ That which is being revealed in such and such terms, its theme, is also at the same time concealing of being. When a disclosure of being occurs, it is understood as a particular presencing, as one among many possible ways of its Being revealed, in its particular being. In the everyday of being-in-the-world of Dasein’s ecstatic hermeneutic existence, *aletheia* as a presencing must also have its contrary, an absencing of being, of other possible interpretations. That

⁵⁹ Martin Heidegger, “On the Essence of Truth,” 116-117, “The Origin of the work of Art,” *Basic Writings* 1993, 176.

⁶⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 1962, 2

⁶¹ David Krell discusses this in his introduction to *Basic Writings*, page 32.

is to say that for every dis-closing of being, there is also a concealment, a forgetting of other possibilities and in this sense, the Being of beings is forgotten.⁶²

In terms of reification, one static concept as dis-closed, closes off other manifestations. To be sure, Being always shows itself, but for Dasein or human existence, its showing is affected according to the content and concern that Dasein brings with it. In a seeking that brings about the direction of the inquiry itself, Dasein requires a specific meaningful disclosure. That which is being revealed, or abstracted from the phenomenal manifestation of Being is taken as some specific being. If this disclosure is taken and turned into a thing as such, then we have reification. When disclosures become held as static concepts and hence are reified then there is the possible denial and hence concealment of Being in terms of its other possible interpretations.

Here we come to understand a more amplified and fundamental understanding of reification and hence the way in which reified or static concepts pose a threat to the mind. By applying Heidegger's project as it relates to the question of Being, Dasein and its disclosure of being that conceals at the same time, we can understand how in an everyday operative level of existence our tendency is to "capture" and statisize being on a practical level that we either forget or remain unaware that such statically held concepts keep us from potentially more informative understandings. In light of Heidegger's project, we can see that reification is essentially a disclosure of being that is held statically. When this sort of conceptual stasis occurs, we are closed off to other possible manifestations of being. Reification, as statically held interpretations, then, is essentially to be closed.

⁶² Martin Heidegger, "On the Essence of Truth," *Basic Writings*, 130-131.

If we understand reification in terms of the ethical application made popular by Marx and more specifically by Lukacs,⁶³ we see immediately the ethical consequences that reification has in reducing humans as being mere things to be used by an industrial capitalist society. Here people had been abstracted, turned into things for mere use. Such ethical applications allows us to see that such moments of reductive disclosures of human beings, explicitly denied and concealed their humanity. Clearly reified static abstractions that are disclosed have meaningful implications both in a positing, and in the case of reifying humans, drastic ethical consequences. When a person is reified, their reduction in humanity is tantamount to a closure on the part of the one who does the reifying.

With the example of human reification we have introduced, we can see the implications of how reification can occur. In fact reification is generally understood in this context. However several things can be considered in light of our arguing that reification is something that is a human phenomenon that primarily concerns cognition. We've shown that human abstraction is a necessary component to human cognition. This was made most proximately by Kant showing us in his Copernican revolution that as we bring form to the material world that understanding can occur, and also in Heidegger's focus on Dasein as the open place where Being becomes manifest. We can see in both philosophers that openness is what it means to be a locus of meaning, that human being is an essential openness to the world. Consequently, this openness as the condition for meaningful interpretations of the world, has the danger of becoming closed. Reification as static concepts implies that disclosures have been given a static thing-hood that is inappropriate. We must keep in mind as indicated by Heidegger, that our interpretive

⁶³ This argument was made earlier in Chapter 2.

abstractions are always at best an approximation or provisional articulation of being.

When we hold these disclosures as things present to us, we close off other possible understandings, often unaware or forgetful that the reification exercises a dominion over us.

This is suggestive of one last important consideration mentioned above. To what extent is stasis necessary for understanding? Is it not the case that in our openness, even as Bloom suggests in the first chapter, that openness requires a stable, static place from which to operate? Do we not need some stability in our interpretations in order to operate? And even so, doesn't such stability provided productivity in fields such as science and therefore shows static concepts to be in some high degree desirable? The initial answer to this is rightly positive. On the contrary we might ask, how can we avoid the extremes, if we are to think reification in the extreme is a closure, a stasis that is unproductive to further understanding, while on the other hand, it is an operational stasis that allows us to move forward in pursuing an inquiry. This has already been alluded to in Heidegger, by the fact that every investigation is already guided by a seeking. Dasein's openness to a disclosure is only in fact possible such that this openness has brought previous understandings with it that sets the conditions for openness. In a very different understanding of the issue of openness that Bloom mocks, an openness that is so open that it is an emptiness. Heidegger shows us that closedness and openness are working in tandem. For us as well as Heidegger, we wish to avoid the pit falls of reification, in remembering or un-forgetting that the concepts we hold as "things as present to hand", are always held as abstract provisionality and we must not forget this problem of stasis.

In the next chapter we will attempt to answer the above questions, particularly in light of whether stasis is desirable. Additionally we will note some modes in which reification appears in our experience. Lastly, we will attempt to summarize the entire project in total and present an explicit set of instances in how we might apply and think of reification as closedness in an educational context.

CHAPTER FIVE

REVISITING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OPENNESS AND CLOSEDNESS

We started this inquiry with the problems surrounding what openness or closedness of mind means. As the investigative impetus, this question and the problem it poses is extremely broad. So we have intentionally narrowed that question to examining the concept of reification as a type of closedness pursued through two particular philosophers. As a theme, reification itself begs an attribution on the part of the mind, in other words what the mind attributes or adds in the process of coming to “know” its world is an interpretive process that can potentially become static. It was argued that this is essentially how we need to understand reification, as the stasis of mental interpretations or also in terms of concepts, such that they form closures. If we understand interpretations as disclosures, then reification of those concepts or interpretations can be easily understood as static closures, or in common parlance, a closed mind.

But having focused on the question of reification through the lens of Kant and Heidegger has borne fruit in pointing out, or at the very least provoking, a positive indication of understanding the entire issue of openness and closedness generally. As we have noted in Heidegger, “openness” or the “open place” has a special significance for the type of being we are, a consciousness relating with in the world.

Openness is understood as an essential characteristic of Dasein or human beings in that they are the “open place” for Being, in its many and various ways of becoming manifest.¹ To understand Heidegger rightly means that being human is constitutive by being open *to* and *for* an interpretive understanding of the world. Openness then describes our most primordial moment and condition of relating to the world.² What is opened up and what becomes disclosed are the particular themes beings take, a process we see in Kant as partially dependant on the material component of the world and the form given on the part of the mind that attempts to make sense of its experience.

Additionally we’ve noted that our being open *to* and *for* is made possible by a bringing of an “always already” history, a set of pre-understandings of tradition and cultural content that provides that open place, a human location, with the possibility of being open. As we’ve suggested Heidegger’s project in *Being and Time* is to show fundamentally that all inquiry is already guided by a prior seeking. That is every specific inquiry, however vague it might be, provides an orientation that impels the seeking, and so constitutes and directs the inquiry. This observation noted in Plato’s *Meno*³ and is employed on the part of Heidegger as a constitutive indication of our being open. This is not dissimilar to Kant’s view that the mind must actively provide form to the material of experience in order to make sense of the world. We understand this then as a fundamental constitutive element of how things are opened for us.

¹ Martin Heidegger, “On the Essence of Truth,” *Basic Writings*, 1993, 122-123.

² For an extended discussion of world-hood and primordial openness see Heidegger’s text “The *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*,” 1995, page 343.

³ We mentioned the relevance of this work by Plato previously in Chapter Four of this work.

Thus having pursued reification as an instance of closedness has lead to or exposed a strong relationship to what openness is regardless of our attempts to narrow our investigation. One can hardly refer to a closed mind without reference to openness, especially as it occurs in Heidegger's understanding of the interpretive process. In some sense the issue of openness as it appears in Heidegger must be elaborated simply because for him, any open place that can have disclosure of the world is also a concealing of other possibilities. The implications then are that an opening that allows for something to be revealed is also simultaneously a sort of stance with the immanent possibility of reification. We will have to make sense of how this works and what it means.

According to Heidegger, every disclosure is at the same time a concealment of being. To identify a particular phenomenon as X is to distinguish it from Y or Z. For all practical purposes, this is a positing of Being as X, or a particular descriptive manifestation of a particular being as such. What is important for us in Heidegger's account is that this naming of an abstraction, into a thing, has other implications. First, is that any account of X, will be understood to be partial and the concealing factor may continue to inhibit further revealing or being open to a better or different understanding of the phenomena. Second, and perhaps more importantly, this disclosure that is at the same time a concealing, suggests that part of being open-minded is at the same time a sort of closing.⁴

⁴ Martin Heidegger, "On the Essence of Truth," *Basic Writings*, 1993, p 129. We have already discussed this in Chapter Four, but it is important to note that the relationship between disclosure and concealment according to Heidegger involves the concurrence of both simultaneously.

We are reminded of Bloom's rhetorical assertion reported in the first chapter that student minds in American education had become so open, that they were in fact closed. This is not what we mean however, though perhaps in all seriousness there is a strong connection between both states of being open or closed that Heidegger's account provokes. Perhaps avoiding the binary disjunction of whether a mind is simply open or closed, a look at the origin of the concepts shows some perhaps more fundamental relationship between the two.

In our examination of reification as a closed mind thus far, we've accepted these terms as an adjective "closedness" or its verb form, "closed". But in conveying an idea, looking at its noun form, "a close" gives us a broader understanding of the term. The definition of a "close" in the Oxford English Dictionary reveals that the vernacular uses of close over and against to that of open has perhaps been over simplified in terms of its verbal use when referring to the mind. A close in old English commonly referred to an enclosure, a spatial reference such as a court yard or at other times referring to the entrance to such a space, or a covered way that led to such a space serving as a 'close' in reference to keeping out of the weather.⁵ We might extend the understanding of a close then as putting on limits on a certain space, giving or creating dimensionality, thus creating spatial form. In this sense, the creation of spatial form is a result of the closing off, or setting limits to a space such as it is at the same time a creating an open place. Consider space without limits and we will literally speak of nothing. Or consider the

⁵*The Oxford English Dictionary*, (New York: Oxford University Press), <http://www.oed.com.flagship.luc.edu/view/Entry/34604?rskey=JpNPPu&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid> (accessed July 2012).

imposition of limits, albeit physically or cognitively, and we can understand a close as creating a simultaneous opening. On the other hand the act or occurrence of disclosure is a distinguishing from other forms. To enclose something is to set it apart from other things. To declare a thing X is to suggest a difference from Y and Z. Such disclosing stipulations of Being then are the necessarily concealing of other themes which Being might take. By this then we might better understand Heidegger's thesis that a disclosing is concurrently a concealing, that is a defining and limiting in that it creates an interpretation thus providing sense to the thing revealed.⁶

Perhaps an essential element in understanding open and close in this sense reveals that a mind, or a door for that matter, is not to be thought of simply as in a state of being opened or closed, but instead having as a dynamic relationship that is creating or a positing of something through the en-closing of limits. At the very least this constitutive dynamic is the process of our coming to know and relate to the world that involves being open for disclosures and that these closures are productive both intellectually and practically in that they reveal or open us to the world. So in some very real and important sense, our being open is a condition for disclosures, the revealing of being in Heidegger's language so that our abstractions of the world necessarily are limited into specific meaningful interpretations or concepts. We have only to think of what Heidegger means by referring to the interpretive as a circular process. In our case we are simply suggesting

⁶ Aside from the elucidation given in his Essay "On the Essence of Truth", Heidegger devotes considerable time in discussing phenomenological method in light of the basics the simultaneity of phenomenological reduction, construction and destruction in the introduction *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. Hofstadter, (Indiana: Indiana University Press), 1982.

that opening and closing are to be thought of in the more holistic sense that Heidegger suggests in his metaphor of the interpretive process as a hermeneutic circle.⁷ Our concern in showing reification distinctly involved in the cognitive process is for the purpose of exploiting the problem when these disclosures become static and bar future possibilities to be open. In keeping with the traditional definition of reification, when an abstraction then is turned or made into a “thing”, that thing-hood status becomes set in such a way as to potentially inhibit further understanding.⁸

So to summarize, this essential point is to make clear the distinction between disclosures and when these revelations become reified. As indicated by Kant the mind provides the necessary form to the material of experience. Interaction with the world means that Being is revealed to a being that is open, a being such as a human, and that revealing will imply limitations, whether it relies on something secure as Kant’s transcendental categories or something less certain, the import of human input is essential. This disclosure of particularized being is equivalent to the moment our abstractions of our experience are given form. These forms then have the possibility to be taken as or made into something more than merely interpretations, but can be statitized such that it becomes a thing, and as such, that it acquires an inappropriate metaphysical status in the mind. Reification is that moment of thing-hood that obscures being open in several ways.

⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 1962, 194-195.

⁸ Heidegger in his essay “The Origin of the Work of Art”, not only gives a good description of the relation between disclosure and concealment as we’ve described in terms of opening and closing, but discusses the thingly quality that occurs in our relating to being in the process.

So where or when exactly does this reification take place? In the next section we will review several ways reification can occur and how these can be thought to attribute to a closed mind.

Modes of reification

Naïve or Direct Realism

Perhaps the most common instance of reification is best observed in the form of naïve or direct realism, or what is sometimes called “common sense realism.” Naïve realism essentially holds that the world we take in through sense perception is to be understood at face value. Any objects that we experience in the world are understood as existing and factual with all properties and characteristics perceived and understood as self evidentially true.⁹ As a formal philosophical approach to knowledge it has been argued that maintaining this approach has serious problems, the main being that variation in perception presents far too many instances that contradict this view. However, if granted that this formal view contains such problems, it is the reality of the problem of variation that has lead to more sophisticated views on the problem of perception as such the nomenclature “naïve” realism suggests. As such we are not here to argue for or against formal theories of perception, but to examine the relevance of reification. The problem of naïve realism is that it operates among many in a less formal instance opposed to the explicit theory. It would not be hard to show that many people naively operate in the world exactly as if what they see is to be interpreted as the case. Much of the time this may be a normative and productive way of operating. But where there are

⁹ Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/perception-episprob/> (accessed July 2012).

exceptions, the naïve approach will present problems when what appears as “obviously” true is in fact not. But those of us who do not hold a too naïve realism are not surprised to discover that some of our perceptions of the world are not always accurate and that it can be problematic to assume that what you see is in fact is not always the case. Our prior reference to the Copernican revolution again serves to remind us that it was common sense perception that made it appear that the sun was revolving around the earth from our perspective. Perhaps the most important point is that naïve realism is an immediate suggestion of perceptual fallibilism, that one may in fact be wrong. It is through errors of concepts we have about the world that we begin to understand the importance of reification as it relates to holding erroneous concepts or interpretations.

That people have naïve or even erroneous views of reality has immediate consequences in how we understand the occurrence of reification. What was understood as common sense among those prior to Copernicus was accordingly shown to be false. In terms of reification the concept they held about the sun’s movement to their own location was a disclosure regarding the nature of the world. What is then disclosed about the world, or the truth of what we perceive is then at issue in light of how concepts or interpretations become reified. Certainly we can expect that in coming to understand the world many of our interpretations will sooner or later be challenged and in need of modification. Reification in these instances becomes a potential problem as the conceptual stasis creates the immanent possibility of new, more evidentially relevant disclosures, or so we are arguing.

At this point a stipulation and distinction between two types of cognitive stabilities that occur when we arrive at interpretations or concepts is needed. Certainly

we can assert that upon any disclosures or interpretation arrived at there is, in some sense, an understanding, and as such would seemingly suggest a cognitive stability. To declare that the sun revolves around the earth indicates stability in the sense that both the understanding and the declaration are not in flux, but describe the case. In the discussion of naive realism, we must clarify the sense in which the concepts we do hold are stable and are distinct from static holdings and hence closure. After all, not all thoughts are reifications. The point of distinction will be to expose the difference by degree that this stability will be such that it does not become reified and statically frustrating a more comprehensive or complete understanding. In the first sense, the base stability that seems necessary in order to have concepts or interpretations we will stipulate as having a stance. This is the type of stability already indicated in the word “under-standing.” As such we will assert that having this type of stance at once has stability and is not so static that it is closed to other or new evidence. In Heideggarian language these interpretations are understood as held as provisional and proximately.¹⁰ On the other hand when a stance becomes hardened to such an extent that it impedes its own modulation in light of new or better evidence we will stipulate this as a moment of stasis, or as we’ve asserted earlier, as statically held concepts, i.e. reification. The primary difference that we will exploit here is when reification occurs; the stasis that impedes conceptual reformulation is essentially an *in-active* stasis opposed to stance as an *active* holding.

¹⁰ Heidegger uses these terms “provisional and proximate” throughout his works to suggest this very type of having interpretations with and in light of the problem of concealing and forgetting about their status.

To understand this idea of an active holding verses a static reified holding, we might already find ourselves reminded of Heidegger's existential phenomenal approach that meant to elaborate on these very issues. As such, Heidegger's language is full of new idioms and often uses verbs to denote active conditions of human knowing, such as *Dasein*, the being who is 'there' in time and is defined as ek-static in essence; a being in movement.¹¹ But it wasn't Heidegger and the existentialists who first rejected the idea of perception and knowledge as passive, but both Plato and Aristotle who understood it essentially as an active process.¹²

Aristotle teaches us in his *Ethics* that developing virtue, whether they be of the moral or intellectual type, is a result of having an active state denoted by the use his use of the Greek word: *hexis*. The word has presented some problems as it has been translated as "habit", and has therefore suggested to readers that Aristotle thinks that to achieve virtue one must simply perform mindless activity. But this is the opposite of what Aristotle intended in explicating his view of virtue. Aristotle is clear in Book Two in the 4th chapter that virtue is to be understood as an active condition distinct from passive states such as feelings and predispositions. Aristotle reminds us that in achieving virtue we must perform in a certain way, "first of all knowingly, and next, having chosen them and chosen them for their own sake and third, being in a stable condition and not

¹¹ See Chapter Four on Heidegger's concept of *Dasein* as there-being and the discussion of his use of ek-stasis as denoting the idea of man in time.

¹² In both of Plato's *Theaetetus* and *Meno* Socrates makes a point of describing knowledge as an active holding that comes from attentive seeing and concentration. For further explanation see Sachs commentary in his introduction to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Joe Sachs, Newburyport MA: Focus Publishing 2002.

able to be moved at all the way out of it.” Joe Sachs in his commentary and translation of Aristotle’s *Ethics*,¹³ suggests that we understand this stable condition as a “state of equilibrium” that denotes the stability we have already referred to in terms taking a stance. However we are reminded that achieving this virtue presupposes the intellectual virtues suggested in Book Four implied in the quote, that knowingly and actively choosing are not passive states. Like moral virtue, Aristotle is “emphatic that we are only open to the world by the effort of holding ourselves ready.”¹⁴

Being-at-work is the term Sachs uses to denote Aristotle’s employment of *hexis* not as mindless activity, but that a *hexis* that is made manifest by an *energia*. Central to Aristotle’s notion of human being is the idea that our being in the world is an active being-at-work, one that is coming to know and actively knowing its world in such a way that it remains open to this work.¹⁵

What Aristotle and Sachs describe for us is a view of knowledge that is an active holding which suggests a stability and yet is not so static as to be reified. To have a stance is an appropriate stability in terms of the activity of the mind. If we oppose the popular notions of perception as merely passive and the negative notion of habit as such, then we can see comparatively good reason to make a distinction between an active stance that is a conceptual holding and reification. On the other hand, once passivity of acceptance of a concept or interpretation is taken as “the case,” or in our terms turned

¹³ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Joe Sachs, 2002.

¹⁴ Aristotle, .xii.

¹⁵ Aristotle, xv.

into a “thing” as such, then we have a stasis or reification and an instance where the mind is not in an active holding itself open but, in lieu of stasis, closed.

Heidegger will additionally speak of Dasein or man as an ek-static being, a being in movement and that in this realization and examination of our own being, we realize that we have stances, belief commitments that we already possess. It is Aristotle’s account of *energia* or the power of the soul, the ability for that sameness (our being) that can change a human’s growth and development that is a being-at-work. According to Heidegger, as one realizes that their existence is hermeneutical conditioned, one adapts one’s stance to holding those concepts or interpretations provisionally or proximately.¹⁶

Dogmatism

What does it mean to hold one’s concepts or abstractions provisionally or in what sense do we mean that this is understood as an activity? It might be that some of us thought something true but felt no need to be heavily committed to the concept. But there are many times we experience the opposite of this, when we or someone we know feels the need to stick to their belief and are very much committed to the concepts they hold regardless of new evidence. This begs Hare’s prior attribution toward the discussion in the way he defines openness as opposed to dogmatism.¹⁷ He defines open-mindedness as the ability to consider new evidence or experiences so that one can re-consider one’s stance. This is opposed to the emotional disposition that sometimes accompanies static

¹⁶ It is not by mistake that Aristotle or even Platonic thinking aligns nicely with that of Heidegger’s ideas. Heidegger specifically researched and was affected by the Greeks, particularly the works of Aristotle. For further discussion see David Krell’s “Introduction to Martin Heidegger,” *Basic Writings*, 1993.

¹⁷ See chapter one for a in depth presentation of Hare’s position.

beliefs such that they become rigidly held in spite of contrary evidence. We casually use the phrase “in spite of,” but it is our clue to understanding the emotive element in a stance that is no longer actively held, but has become static. This is the way that Hare defines what it means to be dogmatic and therefore close-minded.¹⁸ Clearly here we can see that a dogmatic holding is a stasis that is in-active, such that one, by definition, feels inclined to hold regardless of any relevant considerations. Dogmatism then as an instance of conceptual stasis is also rightly understood as an instance of reification that therefore indicates a closed mind. Consequently there may be an active holding to a concept or set of interpretations such that we might consider dogmatism as the activity of keeping the view in question static. But this should not be confused with the activity of perceptual knowing as in the attentive seeing as indicated in Aristotle, the difference being the positive activity of holding concepts provisionally, stable yet always questionable and the inactivity of settling upon a concepts and being done. In this later case the only activity is an actively being closed to any further understanding, such as commitment means in terms of dogmatism. The difference here is to be understood as that which that activity is centered on. In the positive sense one actively holds a concept open to review and the negative one actively refuses review. The concept in the later case remains inactive, but the emotive or dispositional quality of the agent might be said to be actively refusing to re-active the concept in question.

Operationalism

A third aspect of reification involves how we relate to the world. As in Heidegger’s existential analysis, we have already noted this relation has been

¹⁸ William Hare, “In Defense of Open Mindedness,” 1979, 8 .

characterized in terms of one's Being-in-the-world or as one having world-hood where we find ourselves as "always already" having a set of pre-ontological judgments of the world. For Heidegger this has a twofold sense. The first is what he refers to as that which is present-at-hand and forms the ontological judgments that we may find ourselves already having beforehand or ontological determinations that we may yet make. One might attempt to make a parallel here between Heidegger's present at hand and a realism albeit naïve or critical and this would not be incorrect. But what Heidegger wants to show us is that all ontological determinations, those things that are present at hand, take on the character of things "to fix in concepts which are categorical" and also "invested with value."¹⁹ We have already elaborated on the importance of this in chapter four and its relevancy to the problem of reification.

There is however a second sense of having world-hood that Heidegger points to that is distinct from the explicitly ontological character of things present-at-hand. This is Dasein's ontic existence or is specifically the pre-ontological relationship with or having a world that is less explicit of categorical determination of "things" per se. In our ontic existence Heidegger wishes to elaborate on the fact that in having a world, one is an always already relating to things in terms of their use, not just in terms of ontological determinations, but in a pragmatic sense. Accordingly we find ourselves in existence with having already invested interests in things in-order-to do something. Heidegger refers to this way of relating as "readiness-to-hand." It is not that they are understood as

¹⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*. 1962, 91.

entities themselves so much as they operate as tools, or equipment, that are means to achieving some end.²⁰

Regardless, whether we refer to this as an ontic readiness-to-hand, or simply call this way of relating pragmatism, the point is, we are rightly concerned with the description that we are already involved with the world on an operational level, that is often prior to an explicit consciousness. That we come at things, not so much as determined objects prior to our involvement, but use-value is a determiner in our relationship to these things. As we have argued that cognitive determinations or disclosures limit my seeing an object differently in terms of concealment, so does seeing or relating to an object in terms of what it will accomplish for me. In other words, the relevancy of our operational orientation to the world is as much a disclosure as any ontological labeling of being and therefore has potential to become reified. Perhaps the most immediate example of reification in this sense is when we see someone who has creatively used an object that is typically used for other purposes, in a new way. Such as when someone uses milk crates to provide supports for making shelves or the way in which books are used as supports for a coffee table.²¹

In these instances the use of these objects in ways other than what they were intended for shows us that they not only defy the ontological category, but that usage is in fact a determiner. That many of us come up with a creative uses of such objects attests to

²⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 1962, 97, 101. Section III of *Being and Time*, entitled “The Worldhood of the World,” gives an extensive analysis of the difference between ontological present-at-hand and the more prior ontic readiness-to-hand.

²¹ Heidegger, 98. Heidegger’s famous example of how we relate to a hammer in terms of use and ‘equipmentality’ of things.

the possibility that we hold such objects as reified for limited use. The main difference we here want to exploit is how reification can be of an explicit taking of an abstraction as a thing. But Heidegger's existential analysis suggests an existence prior to essence. And in some sense this essence is already determined prior to an ontological determination.

Enlightenment positivism

Finally, reification occurs perhaps in the most explicit sense when someone consciously seeks the thing-in-itself. Perhaps there is no greater representation of this seeking than the hubris of ideals pursued by the Enlightenment thinkers. The Enlightenment is generally understood, at least in terms of philosophy as the pursuit of scientific knowledge in its most positive form. That is, knowledge was the discovery of the very nature and structures of the universe. In many instances, claims made by scientist as well as philosophers, were the specific attempt to establish foundational and indubitable truths. In many cases these truths sought were of the explicit sort that was an intentional pursuit of nature or objects of study, as identity of the thing-itself.

In terms of Enlightenment thinking and ideals, especially as they pertain to knowledge, we might consider Kant as we have already made some of his thought familiar. We might recall that he identifies Plato as a significant start to this grand pursuit of knowing by abandoning the realm of the senses in order to pursue the ideal of the intellectual immediacy of the Forms.²² Kant, in a previous quote, speaks of this hubristic attempt on the part of Plato and Enlightenment ideals through the metaphor of

²² Immanuel Kant, *What is Enlightenment?*

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/kant-what-is.asp> (accessed July 2012). See this essay for a treatment of enlightenment ideals.

the light dove that thought it might fly better in space.²³ While we might immediately recall Kant's limiting of this possibility, the ideal of identifying the thing as it is in-itself was, and perhaps still is, a prominent approach to knowledge. While naïve realism is a simplistic acceptance of things as they are, the desire for discovery of the things themselves has driven much of our history of philosophy and scientific endeavors and to no small success. I will not argue here against a more sophisticated realism or positivism out of respect to those views which are sufficiently defended and held by notable scholars. We have already accepted the idealistic reading of Kant over and against the analytic tradition who read him as attempting to posit a secure foundation for knowledge claims. Certainly in this way Kant serves as a pivotal figure for us and the entire tradition as it concerns the values and ideals in the pursuit of knowledge.²⁴ In this inquiry we have chosen a more interpretivist position, which additionally makes accounting for issues concerning reification more apparent as I have and am attempting to address.²⁵ In light of this then, any position that seeks attainment of the thing-itself can be nothing other than reification *de facto*. In other words, to think that one has attained the thing in-itself is already assumed as an impossibility and so any attempt must then be understood

²³ Recalling this quote of Kant's metaphor of the light dove is most helpful and relevant in showing how the limitations of the mind were the very things that made knowing possible. The phrase often associated with Kant is "the conditions for the possibility of," ascribing necessary limits of human reason.

²⁴ The fact that Routledge has commissioned both an introduction to Continental philosophy as well as an introduction to Anglo-American philosophy attests to the moment difference in Kant. In his Introduction Cutrofello identifies Kant just so.

²⁵ Reification as defined and discussed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, finds itself more easily aligned in terms of reification as an action of the mind in the process of turning an abstraction into a thing. As it was suggested earlier, this is action of the mind begs the mind appropriating the abstraction.

as a static concept. While the Enlightenment thinker may have been diligent and rigorous in analysis, such a conclusion of having the thing is to fix it not in terms of simply being a stance, but to declare it absolutely and certainly known, which suggests that no further activity is required to understand it. The abstraction is literally taken as a thing and becomes statically held.

However if one could indeed obtain the thing-it-self, which suggests clear and perfect knowledge of the thing, it might be argued that closure is appropriate as the abstraction will be perfectly adequate to the thing. In other words the traditional correspondence theory of “*veritas est adaequatio rei et intellectus*,” truth is the adequation of the thing to the intellect, means there is a perfect accord between the thing and the concept, or a one to one correspondence. Traditionally this type of accord was reserved for an infinite Being and is therefore seemingly hard to come by for lesser finite minds. Kant accounted for such a possibility and referred to these as intellectual intuitions or noumena, as distinct for our sensual intuitions or phenomena. These sense intuitions were reserved for us, as we require sense matter, which applies to the forms while God’s thought was equal to the thing as it is; the thing-in-itself.²⁶

The result of which is to say any attempt to claim a one to one correspondence epistemologically is a violation of Kant’s claim that sense matter is necessary for human cognition. While a debate may rage regarding the existence and reliability of transcendental categories, much of contemporary philosophy has rejected the Enlightenment ideals of perfected knowledge demonstrated so adequately in Kant’s

²⁶ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans Guyer and Wood, 1998, 354. Kant discusses this key distinction in light of setting noumena as a distinct negative and limiting concept for us in that we are incapable of intuiting the thing itself.

hubristic metaphor of reason as a dove that would project itself to fly beyond the possibility of its own conditions. However, Kant's use of making the phenomena and noumena distinction would suggest that reification would not be a mistake from a god's perspective, but that a one to one correspondence between the thing and the concept would be expected. In other words in the mind of a god, that abstraction is equivalent to the thing.

Examples of reification in the world

Certainly by now we have identified reification, shown its prominence philosophically and shown that it can be understood as a conceptual stasis and how it functions as a cognitive closure. Additionally we spoke of the dynamic relationship that exists between openness and closedness of mind that is more complex than an over simplified oppositional binary understanding of those terms. Given this cognitive dynamic of how openness and closedness of interpretations are related, we distinguished a difference in two types of cognitive holdings. Every understanding will presuppose a stance, which is taken and stabilized. This stability can be an active stance or holding of an interpretation and therefore open, or it can become in-active and static, reified and therefore closed. When a concept is taken and turned into a thing as such, we have a stasis and therefore reification. This might beg the question, can one avoid reification or are we prone to constantly reify things on a daily level?

It would seem that reification is something we are all prone too. It would seem that everyone could recall a moment when a cherished idea or fundamental belief they held eventually broke under closer scrutiny. In Plato's "Meno," Socrates continually questions Meno on his definition of virtue. Socrates pursues Meno's ideas and shows

that they are full of contradictions. Finally in exasperation Meno tells Socrates that he has become immobilized and can no longer give an account of what he thinks.²⁷ This moment is often equated with the beginning of Socratic wisdom: knowing that you don't know. Educationally, this is often seen as a profound moment when one may realize that other thoughts, concepts and interpretations that one holds are indeed now possibly open to question. Or in another sense what was thought to be the case, has become destabilized and one is now possibly open to further disclosures.

What does this mean then in terms of reification and its relevance for education? We may speak of how closedness and openness should be considered and how they relate and function in a cognitive dynamic, but this leaves us still wondering at a more general relevance and applicability. It was argued initially that if any profession should have just concern regarding what and how a mind functions in respect to its being open or closed, the educational theorist is the most immediate candidate. To this end then, the inquiry has thus far been pursued and what remains is application to those educational practitioners who may greatly benefit from understanding the clarity, relevancy and function of reification that will hopefully provide insight into practice.

To begin with, our examination of reification and its connection to a closed mind has been an inquiry that has focused largely on what is the most basic and fundamental moment of its occurrence. I will refer to this as cognitive or **content reification**. It is the singular moment where a concept or set of interpretations become statically held, such that they either are explicitly thought of existing things or as such function as though they

²⁷ Plato, *Meno*. Trans. G.M.A. Grube, (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1992, 70.

were, and therefore obstruct new disclosures indicating cognitive closure. On way to think about this then is that reification is a personal issue, or at the most primary level, its manifestation is on the level of the individual level. All other examples of reification that we will examine are subject to this basic moment of reductive stasis. In other words, while the application and effects may be diverse, in the following cases, reification is still operating on a cognitive individual level as indicated by this prior investigation. So what follows from the examination of this reification on the level of the individual, we will look at larger applications that have social implications. We might refer these larger instances as institutional reifications, either singular or sets of ideas that have become reified and in some way have been applied socially.

Secondly, we will examine reification as it pertains to teaching. Rather than re-examine a teacher's concepts for the possibility of content reification, we will look specifically at reification in terms of **method**. In other words, how methods can become reified and hence obstruct or frustrate student learning. Reification here is extended from the conceptual stasis which is also operating with the addition that the stasis has employment in terms of practice that not only affects the teacher, but students as well. The import here is to realize that the effects of reification will have impact beyond individual considerations.

Our next application of reification will be what I will refer to as **human reification**, or rather when humans have been reified. This will prompt us to consider Marx's contribution the discussion of reification as it applies to human relationships and has important ethical implications. It will also have significance to the classroom setting and education structures as a whole. But we must keep mindful that in any moment of

reification is always a result of the most constitutive elements, the static reductive concepts. We say this, however, as a point that this sort of reductive categorization of concepts, whether in terms of racism, sexism or even specific educational profiling of students, is a subset of this basic issue of reified concepts. To the extent and degree that reification indicates a misappropriation of the subject in question is to the degree to which it can be understood in ethical terms.

With the consideration of Marx and Human reification we will be prompted to examine reification at the policy level. Another way of thinking about this, or as it occurs by degree, is what I will refer to as **institutional reification**. At this level, what has become reified is a set of methods and ideas, applied at the level of policy and by extension has become instituted in terms of a set of procedures, in some cases incarnate in the form of brick and mortar, albeit a school or simply a building that is dedicated to those ends. Several factors present problems here as not only may the intuition be dedicated or intentionally static in reality, but on a second level, such institutionalization can create a habitualization or sedimentation of practices that can misappropriate the original aim in that those reified practices becoming an end in itself rather than the means for which they originally were established.²⁸ This at once presents an interesting possibility in the first instance as to the fact that reification maybe seen as a desirable end. In other words such communities, perhaps religious or even ideological, can become so committed to certain ideas, that they are in fact intentionally reifying their

²⁸ For an extended discussion of this see Berger and Luckmann's *The Social Construction of Reality*, (New York: Doubleday, 1966), 50, 63 – 67. where institutionalization includes habitualized practices as well as objectified sedimented ideas.

content. In religion, this would simply equate to the dogmatic form of reification, a set of fixed beliefs that are rigidly held to and that define that community. In this sense then we will also have to account for the reification of **ideology**. One may judge for themselves as to whether that is a desirable end, but in any case, such institutions or communities are in fact closed. In the second instance, institutions can be so codified that their behavior becomes directed towards self preservation over and against original practices that were intended towards other ends. One might consider how a church, in seeking converts to its faith, over time begins to reify its existence such that it instead seeks to preserve its traditions and culture. We often equate these moments as nostalgic attempts to recapture or preserve the past, or reified ways of doing things

Content Reification

We have already given some indication as to how reification may be on work at the level of the student in referring to the torpifying of Plato's Meno. In Meno's case, his reifications, or at the very least his pretensions of what he thought he knew, had been undone. This is the moment that is essential in understanding the relevancy of reification to the classroom or in any instance where a student is already operating with a fixed of set concepts. We might recall the relevancy of Heidegger's contribution that we all approach an inquiry with a guiding concept. In other words, the students in our classroom come to class with some fixed concepts in terms of what they expect or what a thing is or how it is thought to work. This is equivalent to saying that we all have disclosures of the world and we bring these disclosures with us. Students having the sort of understanding that we have identified as a stable stance as actively held is the ideal. A teacher's end is to teach students and in doing so, establish stable content. But the

teaching profession needs additionally to realize with this distinction in mind, they are also teaching a student a sort of disposition of having concepts as actively held as opposed to becoming static reifications. Accordingly, when a student maintains an active stance in this way, he or she can have a set of concepts but is at the same time open to new evidence, thus having the ability to critique their own and others positions and synthesize the necessary elements that further understanding. Opposed to this, however, is the possibility of a student whose ideas are static and reified and any new evidence or teaching content is lost to them. One only has to recall the adage “thinking you know the answer is the surest obstruction to learning.” By way of personal example, I had a professor that attempted to explain a theological theory to me in a classroom setting. I asked if what he was explaining was a part of special revelation or natural revelation, a distinction created by Thomas Aquinas. I had understood the distinction to be sound such that my questioning presupposed the disjunction; one or the other. The professor looked at me quizzically and tried to re-explain the theory without answering my question. We were both somewhat confused. I was at a loss to understand his point and he at a loss to understand why I had asked about natural and special revelation. Later I realized that the concepts special and natural revelation were so set, reified, that I could not make sense of the new or even completely different information the professor was trying to instill in me. I was functionally closed at that moment and the static concepts I was depending on to understand the professor were in fact creating an obstacle in my understanding him and the lesson he was attempting to convey.

Content reification is the most fundamental and basic moment of reification and the examples perhaps legion. If one cannot think of a personal moment of having reified

concepts, one might think of a time when one's ideas were either dispelled, like Meno's indicating a prior reified concept that had been undone or a time when something simply didn't make sense due to the categories you held. Perhaps some of us who have undergone the educational process have experienced having concepts or theories dear to us only to find out they can no longer be held. In fact it often seems like the case that we reflectively look back on ideas we once held and wonder how it was we were able to maintain them. In some cases, these ideas, the currency of our thoughts, functioned to block a new and better understanding of things. The impetus of this moment, the moment we come to realize that static concepts we've held on to have frustrated a more qualitative account and understanding is one of the main lessons that this inquiry has sought to identify.

Popular culture is full of such moments of over-coming reified concepts. One may consider the song "*Lola*" by the band The Kinks. The song narrates a story of a young man who comes across an exotic woman at a bar. In the verse we understand a moment of confusion as he sings, "Now I am not dumb, but I can't understand how she walks like a woman but talks like a man." A few stanzas later, the singer discovers the truth that "I know what I am and I'm a man and so is Lola." Perhaps it is more in the moments of de-reification that we discover that we had static concepts in the first place, that what was before did not entirely make sense. The singer declared he had met a woman. It might easily be assumed that to his surprise "she" was in fact a man, the static acceptance of an identity created the surprise.²⁹

²⁹ Davies, Ray. "Lola", *Lola Verses Powerman and the Moneygoround, Part One*. RCA Records, released In the UK June 1970. "Lola," a song written by Ray Davies

In terms of classroom application a teacher must simply remember that cognition is prone to such reifications. We might invoke Piaget's theory of cognitive development noting that concrete thinking is a stage prior to the development of abstract thinking and the reification of concepts at the level of the concrete may be even more desirable if not necessary by definition, but can soon obstruct development. In other words if we assume prominence to Piaget's account of cognitive development, we can assume that reification is akin to concretization in thinking and therefore unavoidable. But the development to the stage of abstract thinking requires the distinction of content from material.

Reification now becomes a potential problem in terms of maturity of cognition.³⁰ The goal in the classroom setting will not be to identify concepts that are reified in the students' minds, though awareness of this issue can help determine the cause of misunderstanding. The larger issue surrounding reification and its linking to a closed mind is to strive to teach and instill a disposition in the student of conceptual active engaged stances that allow potential future modulation. The educational ideal is the creation of minds that can remain open to further learning.

Another popular example we draw from is from the movie *The Karate Kid*. The main character, Daniel, is a young kid who is being bullied at school. Determined to defend himself he decides to pursue the martial arts. Fortunately the local maintenance man, Mr. Miyagi, is experienced, knowledgeable and offers to teach Daniel. Daniel has a certain set of beliefs or expectations as to how martial arts training should occur. To his

of the Rock band The Kinks, where a young man enters a bar in Soho London and unknowingly meet a Transvestite. Lola was released In the UK June 1970.

³⁰ For an development of Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development see his *Construction of reality in the child*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. 1957).

dismay Daniel is subjected to an intense list of chores such as painting and cleaning around Mr. Miyagi's home. Daniel's expectations of what his training ought to be are reifications to the extent that they are static notions of what he thinks the training is. There is a moment we see Daniel's utter frustration of having worked hard for several days and feeling used by his master as free labor. In a dramatic moment for those of us watching the story, Daniel vents his frustrations verbally to his master. Mr. Miyagi yells: "wax off!" while simultaneously throwing a punch at his young student. In response Daniel quickly blocks the punch, with the very same "wax off" motion Mr. Miyagi had insisted Daniel use in cleaning. Daniel's eyes are opened as much as his mouth is closed in stunned silent realization that he had been learning the basics all along. Daniel is in a sense stunned like Meno was under Socrates' relentless questioning. Daniel was brought to utter frustration partially due to having suffered under reified notions of the kind of training he supposed. Daniel's eyes are, however, dramatically opened when he understands that the work he has done was the teaching he had desired all along. In other words Daniel was closed to the fact that he was, in fact, training, instead of simply working. When we use such words in referencing Daniel's expectations did not correspond to Mr. Miyagi's method of teaching, we are clued to the fact that Daniel was operating under reified notions and for a time was unable to see the lesson at hand.³¹

³¹ Robert Mark Kamen, John G. Avildsen, *The Karate Kid*, Columbia Pictures, 1984.

Reification of Method

We consider our example of the Karate Kid as a positive example of how method can be used to overcome reification of content, specifically Daniel's. As such students' ideas, as much as our own, can potentially suffer reification and inhibit clearer understandings. Once Ralph understood the application of his work, his interest is enlivened. Mr. Miyagi's **method** or that of a teacher can have a deleterious or ampliative effect on a student's motivation as well as ideas. In the case of Daniel and perhaps for the sake of the plot, we as the audience are to learn that we all have reified concepts or expectations. We along with Daniel, have ideas of what the martial arts training are and we are brought along with Daniel to think he is being used. The dramatic surprise is, however, that Mr. Miyagi's method of teaching was not simply training Daniel in the physical aspects of martial arts, but showing that there is also a cognitive element to the training that Daniel must appreciate. At the very least, in this case, it seems that in trusting your master or teacher would be in your best interests in mind regardless of first having a complete understanding.³²

But the above is an example of method as it is used to positive effect. What if a method itself becomes reified on the part of the teacher to deleterious effect? Here we

³² One thinks it a common problem that the students and in most cases the parents, bring concepts and expectations of what will be accomplished on the part of their local educational institutions. Most educators will appreciate the sense of what it means having to suffer under these sorts of reifications. There has always been an irony in that a student, which is by definition a position of ignorance, will chose and dictates the terms of his education to those who are in the profession.

understand method “as a procedure for attaining an object” or in this case a desired end.³³

By object or end we understand that these are the base-line concepts being sought and are distinct from the path or approach to attaining them. It would seem that in either case the ends sought or the method used both have potential to become reified. In this case, we simply need to think of instances where the “old tried and true” methods seem not to produce the desired results. In the case of teaching we often find that one method that was effective at creating understanding among our students can in other times or situations be less or completely ineffective. Insisting that our methods are proven and effective can sometimes themselves be obstacles to understanding the reified prejudices we hold. One such program put forth with the intent to mitigate this problem is National Board Certification. This program was instituted as a process of getting teachers to reflect critically and rigorously analyze their methods and demonstrate their effectiveness. In this way the program initiates a set of standards that must be met that has the effect of having teachers consider the effects of their methods. This reflective and analytical process is a method to de-reify practices that have become routine or habit with the hope of stirring teacher effectiveness.³⁴

Marx’s Contribution

We have thus far avoided a specific Marxist analysis of reification in order to concentrate on identifying reification phenomenologically. Before we move on to Marx we might

³³ The Oxford English Dictionary, <http://www.oed.com.flagship.luc.edu/> (Accessed July 2012).

³⁴ What follows is the website for NBC, but reviewing the requirements of certification will show the claim indicated above. The National Board Certification process is in a real sense a method that causes reflection on methods that have been or are to be employed.

point out that our process of examining reification was to look at from the level of human consciousness, how the individual reifies things. As we move towards ways in which Marx understood reification, we recognize an explicit social application. This is important simply because while reification has been in use by many traditions,³⁵ its largest and most sustained development and application has been on the part of Marx and his followers.³⁶ In all due respect, Marx and his tradition have given us a powerful analytic to understand the reifying affects as it effects all of society, especially as it pertains to political structures. We can hardly then, in seeking some application of the way in which reification shows up in educational structures, avoid reference to the work done on the part of Marx, nor would we desire to avoid this. In fact to show an application of reification, the phenomena as the way we've identified it here, we must consider that our interpretation and concepts are prone to statization. The structures built on the part of these interpretations are even more likely to promote literal concretizations, hence, policies and institutions as existing entities that are testaments to these statisizations and therefore explicitly encourage their own perpetuation. When this occurs the policies and structures tend to re-enforce those static concepts.³⁷

And yet, we have pursued reification in the context of Kantian and Heideggarian philosophy in order to expose its cognitive static element with the aim of showing how

³⁵ In chapter 2 I attempted to not only show a historical account of the concept, but pulled from sources from differing traditions.

³⁶ Lukacs furnishes us with perhaps one the best examples and was discussed in Chapter 2.

³⁷ Considering the prior reference, we might again refer to Berger and Luckmann's analysis of institutionalization that relies heavily on a Marxist or dialectical materialism. See page 5 of the introduction to *The Social Construction of Reality*, 1966.

reification functions as a closure on the level of the individual and therefore informs our understanding of what we mean when we speak of an open or closed mind. In this respect, Marx can contribute to our understanding how this closure of static concepts affects educational policy and institutions. Let us then proceed to give Marx his due and by extension see to the extent to which reification has profound implications beyond the closure of our concepts. As that cognitive closure functions in reified social structures, we will see its implications in terms of method as it concerns the student, educational policy, institutionalization and ideology.

We might begin with Marx's account of the phenomenon of reification which found expression in his application of Hegel's concept of Alienation³⁸ along with Marx's analysis of the fetishization of the commodity form. Specifically as this abstraction "commodity" takes a form, it is reified as such.³⁹ Similar instances, Marx notes, are other such abstractions as "labor" and "capital" as instances of cognitive reifications. But to understand Marx's notion of reification we need to begin with his assessment of the capitalist economy and the way it determines social consciousness, structures and relationships. Marx argued that under capitalism, man had become one more economic factor of production, in terms of labor value, one abstraction of his being that reified him as a thing and therefore resulted in the reduction of his humanity.

³⁸ G. W. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller, (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1977), 111.

³⁹ In *Capital Vol 1*, Chapter One, section four, Marx gives a complete account of the power the commodity form takes. <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/> (accessed July 2012).

Capital employs labor. The means of production are not means by which he can produce products, whether in the form of direct means of subsistence, or as means of exchange, as commodities. He is rather a means for them, partly to preserve their value, partly to valorize it, i.e. to increase it, to absorb surplus labor. Even this relation in its simplicity is an inversion, a personification of the thing and a reification of the person, for what distinguishes this form from all previous ones is that the capitalist does not rule the worker in any kind of personal capacity, but only in so far as he is "capital"; his rule is only that of objectified labor over living labor; the rule of the worker's product over the worker himself.⁴⁰

In the quote above we can identify three forms of reification. First, reification in the most basic sense that of the cognitive content being taken as a thing in-itself. In this particular case it is human beings that are reified in to "labor-things," or humans as "objectified" labor. Not only is cognitive content reified, but the reduction of humans to things is the second instance of human reification. Lastly this is made possible by the larger reification of Capitalism as an ideology. In this case "capital" or "the capitalist" is what employs labor, and we see the ideological implications to reification on the larger scale in terms of class consciousness and implications of capitalism affecting social structures, social policies and institutions.

For our purposes, the importance of Hegel is that human consciousness manifests itself in a series of stages identifiable in particular forms of consciousness and as such can be explained as reifications.⁴¹ Marx identified these stages in terms of their ideological significance. Capitalism according to Marx as was one of these reified sociological forms and was supported by such terms as wage value, forces of

⁴⁰ Marx's *Economic Manuscripts of 1861-63*, "Part Three Relative Surplus Value, k) Productivity of Capital. Productive and Unproductive Labor." <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/> (accessed July 2012).

⁴¹ Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955), 112-113 We have already noted this in Chapter 2

industrialization, “Laws” of supply and demand had profound effects on how humans perceived and understood themselves. Human consciousness was affected in terms of identity on the level of the individual and affected social relationships as well as political structures that maintained and perpetuate the reified ideological forms. Capitalism as a larger concept included a system of interdependent concepts. In other words, an ideology of reified notions such as “capital”, “labor” and “commodity” themselves imposed on in the structures of society as a naturally occurring phenomenon. As such that these reified forms affected human consciousness at all levels.

Marx believed this and several other factors caused man to become alienated from himself, the things he created, as well as from others. Not only was man reduced to a thing, a equation in terms of labor ratio, but abstractions such the ‘Free Market’ suggested such a ideological reification that Georg Lukacs, one of Marx’s followers, coined the phrase, the “reification of class consciousness.”⁴² Class consciousness is the point when reified terms have taken a prominent ideological form, such that those who operate under its assumptions believe falsely that the reified forms that the system of value has determined for them are actually the case.⁴³

In light of Marx then we will proceed to examine the remaining examples of reifications as they affect humanity, policies, institutions, and ideology. First, we will identify some examples independently and then, lastly, show the prominence in the

⁴² Georg Lukcas, *History of Class Consciousness*, trans. R. Livingston, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002), 46.

⁴³ Marx often referred to this as “false consciousness.”

current policy of “No Child Left Behind,” focusing mainly on the implications of how assessment pertains to reification.

Human Reification

Human reification, as we have seen in Marx, can have an ethical impact as it involves the reduction of humanity into things. In that people are turned into things, we might equate the moment of closure we’ve identified earlier to be akin to what is meant by reduction.⁴⁴ We must note, as in Marx, that we can clearly see people are turned into things in terms of social relations. One might simply note suggestive contemporary terms such as “human resources” or human capital. There is a distinction to be drawn between the content reification of a person and its actualization. We might think it, but to act on this reduction is quite different. Marx is clear on both accounts and so must we be as it affects not simply socio-economic relationships, but the very way in which we conceive of people. We’ve mentioned above that content reification is the fundamental constitutive moment that is present in any activation of that static concept. From the hermeneutic and phenomenological perspectives we see this from a good vantage. The implication then from this perspective is that any instances of racism or any ethnic reduction, limiting people in terms of ethnicity, culture or race, is a reification that takes this form of de-humanization. This is just as true in the case of sexism where conceptual reifications in sexual differences are reductive and often result in terms of objectification. This is then similar to what Marx identifies in terms of the reification of workers as “labor value.” Human workers are reduced to use values in relation to overall capital and

⁴⁴ By associating this reduction to closure we are at the very least equating the notion of a limit being put on the concept or person, such that the value of the thing is lessened.

market values. In this way, we have generally understood reification as a distinct problem, ethically, as not treating humans as ends, but as means.⁴⁵

This same issue of human reification has equivalent issues as it affects the classroom. As reification is a human phenomenon, we can easily infer that a teacher's view of a student can likewise be reductive. Consider the issue of tracking as a way of putting students on a course of education that is deemed appropriate to them. Certainly the teacher must engage in the process of evaluating and assessing the student and, in labeling the student, presupposes the possibility of reifying the student. Obviously such assessment occurs as a means to get students the kind of education they need. But the danger lies in reified reductions that are a part of putting those students in certain tracks in the first place. While this may not be equivalent to de-humanization on the level of racism, it is, however, a categorical reduction that can devalue the student's potential. If we accept that this is especially important in cases where students have been "mis-tracked" to lower performative expectations, then we must accept that reified reductions can be problematic. Much of this relies on the belief that testing will accurately indicate the capacity of the student, rather than the level of skill or knowledge acquired. Certainly there may be pragmatic situations where testing is the method that determines the future of a student, but a conceptual reduction of their capabilities does not need to follow. And it seems that this is often the case. When it does, that student has been reified by the teacher, the program or institution, and potentially the society. This is especially true if

⁴⁵ We mean to specifically invoke Kantian Ethics, particularly in considering "people as a kingdom of ends," such as discussed in his *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*. trans. J. W. Ellington. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1981).

the larger society accepts the label as an authoritative determination applied by that educational structure as indicative of capacity and value. Additionally the student will often accept the reification as determination of their identity. Often students will declare that they are not an A student material thereby accepting a reified reduction of their own identity.

The example of tracking suggests the larger issue of assessment. While we have noted the fundamental importance of content reification we perhaps need, in the educational context, to also stress the importance of the impact on human reification. Tracking begs a larger issue of assessment on the part of education. Assessment, the quantitative and qualitative evaluation of students, teachers, methods and policies, is perhaps a core example. The question that we will need to keep in mind is what is being measured and in what sense is that measurement taken as a form of adequation of the person.

Institutional Reification

Let's begin with introducing one of the most recent and prominent policies enacted under the Bush administration which continues to have significant impact, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002(NCLB). It was partially motivated by the intent to increase the achievement of disadvantaged students and promote equity but was also a way of addressing accountability in education as a whole. The essential elements of NCLB act was to establish and promote an increase in student achievement which meant that the federally mandated act would hold states, schools and teachers accountable for

their outcomes. The accountability and improvements would be achieved through multiple levels of assessment.⁴⁶

These assessments are indicated in some of the policies set forth on the part of NCLB: Annual testing- tests designed to measure student progress determined by state standards. Academic Progress- states requiring schools to show certain amounts of achievement which could affect federal funding of their schools. Report Cards- states are required to give report cards as assessing the effectiveness of any given school or districts. Teacher Quality- an incentive programs for teachers to become “highly qualified” by seeking recertification and secondary education.⁴⁷

While there are many components to NCLB, it is clear that assessment is a primary issue. Assessment of schools, teachers, school administrators, and above all, students, being conducted in the name of quality, accountability, performance and achievement, with an end to not only improve educational opportunities for those disadvantaged but improvement of the entire system. NCLB as a policy instituted name by the U.S. the federal Department of Education provides us ample opportunity to show reification as it potentially relates to issues of assessment, measurement, outcomes or any other similar term.

⁴⁶ Here one can read the NCLB as described In terms of policy enacted on the part of the administration, U.S. Department of Education:
<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/landing.jhtml> (accessed July 2012)

⁴⁷ Education Week furnishes a good overview of specific areas of assessment.
Education Week, <http://www.edweek.org/ew/issues/no-child-left-behind/> (accessed July 2012)

To begin with, we need to understand what is meant by assessment. In the most basic sense, assessment is defined by Webster's as "The action or an instance of assessing value or appraisal."⁴⁸ In the educational context, assessment is perhaps a most basic element of determining knowledge, skills or abilities of individuals, or perhaps effectiveness of the institutions. The OED indicates: "The process or means of evaluating academic work; an examination or test."⁴⁹ Some educational institutions define it as follows:

"We define assessment as follows: Assessment is the process of gathering and discussing information from multiple and diverse sources in order to develop a deep understanding of what students know, understand, and can do with their knowledge as a result of their educational experiences; the process culminates when assessment results are used to improve subsequent learning."⁵⁰

Regardless of the myriad definitions set in language to appeal to our best and highest intentions, assessment, which has always been a part of education and is essentially a determinative judgment.⁵¹ We may rightly invoke Kant, if not already in reference to Webster and the OED that assessment, originally meant to bring a set of particular cases under a universal. In the case of educational assessment, this ideal of

⁴⁸ *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary*, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/> (accessed July 2012).

⁴⁹ *The Oxford English Dictionary*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

⁵⁰ University of Oregon, Teaching Effectiveness Program, <http://tep/uoregon.edu/resources/assessment/index.html> (accessed July 2012)

⁵¹ Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgment*, trans. J. C. Meredith. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964).

knowledge of a student is to set a procedure, an exam, which can measure those particular cases that are to be subsumed under the universal notion of what is meant by proficiency. In short, in education we test people in order to determine their level of competency according to some accepted standard.

Now let it be understood, that assessment seems to be an unavoidable necessity, if not imperative and operational good, that institutions as well as individuals should desire for the sake of self examination, reflection, identity and development. Assessment or judgment is essential in what it means to be a rational being.⁵² What we wish to identify in terms of assessment, or perhaps more essentially in judgment, is the possibility of reification. This is not surprising given that much of what has been discussed in terms of a definition of reification implies judgments about concepts and their ontological status as such and such determination. Likewise any judgment that is determinative has a way of making a descriptive claim regarding the content that it is assessing. All assessments are processes that attempt to identify and make a determination.

The question will be begged to what extent are assessments adequate determiners of its ends? Invoked here is the concept of adequation as it's understood in the epistemic conditions for knowledge.⁵³ If assessments are tools to make determinations, then their success will depend on some degree of adequation. It is important to point out that adequation is achieved partially, but it is problematic if we think we can have "complete" adequation. If adequation is achieved, then we have a 100% reliable means of making a

⁵² Again we may invoke Kant here in terms of this assertion, if not a host of others.

⁵³ We mean to invoke the medieval notion of adequation as used in correspondence theories of knowledge as we did earlier in Chapter Four.

determination. Given that we've already sided with those philosophically that any claim of perfect epistemic adequation is beyond our ability to achieve, it would follow that our determinations must be of a lesser degree. To think then that an assessment is adequate is to think that it achieves a thing-in-itself quality, or a static reification.

It is worthy to note that policies, if not the methods themselves, are intentional procedures with a pragmatic end toward determining, through assessment, the abilities of a certain sample of students. We would agree that assessment must be performed, but what is the claim being made regarding the assessment? What does it signify? In the case of human assessment, the ecstatic being we have defined above, assessment at best can be a particular momentary claim of performed achievement. In other words, we can make a pragmatic claim that Johnny on this day, all things being equal, scored a 70% on his test, and as a result we can suggest that he must achieve this standard in order to move to the next phase of his education. This way of thinking about achievement is pragmatic in that it sets the standard to be achieved. But if we look at Johnny and claim he is only a C student and is therefore average, we've generalized from this test that he is of a certain quality. We have reified Johnny's potentiality. If this determination follows Johnny, many at admission boards and human resource departments are likely to make a quick and similar determination of Johnny's adequacy.

Grades then or other sorts of achievements, such as certificates and degrees, can re-enforce a reified notion of adequacy. For instance, Chris may have his Ph.D. in education with years of experience teaching and working with undergraduates, but without a certificate of academic advising he may not be considered for a job in the field of advising. We may not know to what extent Chris is or is not adequate for such a

position, even though his experience and training excels in those areas that can be considered basic for an advising position. Yet, if Chris does not have the certificate, an indication of ability, the easy conclusion is that he is not adequate for the job, even though he has a higher degree of skill and experience. In such things and to some extent, those assessed determinations, certificates, degrees and even grade point average serve rightly as indicators of proficiency. But often these indicators, or ways of assessing, end up limiting or closing off opportunities due to reified notions of assessment as adequate indication.

In the above cases, in the context of education, reification affects the individual most powerfully. But as much as individuals are prone to reify their own concepts, so are they often likely to reify others. Policies and institutions do not necessarily cause the problem of reification. But, in that they are set by those human agents that reify, the power of reification can be to an extrapolated and in practice can re-enforce reifications.

How, then, does this affect closure or what we have been inquiring about regarding a closed mind? In as much as reifications occur on the individual level and to the extent that this is magnified on the policy or institutional level, these reified static notions operate to close off possibilities. In the case of content reification, the individual or institution that reifies Johnny as an average student is in a real sense closed off from Johnny's being more than such a determination. Institutionally, such reification also closes off Johnny from attending certain schools, getting certain jobs etc. Consequently, Johnny, confronted with constant affirmation of his reified self, learns to accept himself in such terms. This example is not unlike Marx's claim that the social structures that operate in Capitalism create and reinforce reified concepts of the self. The acceptance of

these structures as “naturally” given is what Marx will refer to as false consciousness and in effect, ideological influence as a whole.

Ideological reification

We might infer then that, where institutions are served by these labels and determinations for pragmatic ends, they become reified to the extent that they seem like natural and inevitable conclusions. If we were to take Marx in his full application to the social structures we would see that ideological reification, potentially a redundant term, as Marx used it implied a the "production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness," and all that "men say, imagine, conceive."⁵⁴ Ideology served as a grand narrative that encapsulated the entire culture in terms of setting the discourse for the society.

Consider the ideological implications of the “free market” as a reified concept. Much of society believes in the actual existence of this concept. Defined in terms of laws of supply and demand, this reification determines how relations are expected to occur within the market place and it is supposed, purported and actively believed that there is, in nature a free market to which we must conform. There is no better example of reification than taking this abstraction as a literal existing thing. The reified notion of the free market as an ideology has profound influence in determining our patterns of thinking, on our public and social discourse, on our values and influence on our institutions. In a recent Department of Education initiative, part of the requirement to

⁵⁴ Karl Marx, and Frederick Engels. *The German Ideology Part One, with Selections from Parts Two and Three*, together with Marx's "Introduction to a Critique of Political Economy" (New York: International Publishers, 2001).

become an evaluator is experience in “decision making and human capital.”⁵⁵ Here, reification of persons has been easily accepted and perpetuated by our leadership, showing the profound influence of economic ideology in determining our thoughts. Humans are reified as capital and perpetuated by one of our largest educational institutions setting policy and discourse for the entire nation. As if this weren’t enough to furnish an example of ideological reification, we have only to look at our local schools and colleges, where the business models reify the presidents or superintendents as CEOs, the teachers as service providers, and parents and students in terms of customers and schools as purchase locations. In this case, while this might not provide us an example of human reductions, it does show us the way in which ideology can be reified and so sets the terms of relations which has profound consequences on those in the system.

Similarly this ideological reification can be seen in the language and concepts on the part of the NCLB. Diane Ravitch, former assistant to the secretary of education and once noted proponent of NCLB has become a harsh critic indicating that NCLB has introduced the free market model to the educational sector by introducing competition and incentives as well as punitive measures for those not meeting requirements. Ravitch argues strongly that a push toward privatization with the emergence of charter schools and vouchers has put the entire system in jeopardy. Those schools that don’t meet the federal standards stand to lose funding and in some cases will have been or will be shut down. As it so happens in these cases, most of the “at risk schools” are in low income

⁵⁵ The U.S. Department of Education,
<http://www.2.ed.gov/programs/teachincentive/index.html/> (accessed July 2012).

districts. With some irony the notion of no child left behind as reification has seemingly subverted its own end, by leaving many a child behind.⁵⁶

Part of Ravitch's dismay was the way assessment was used and perceived to push ideology. As an educator she understood "the complexity of assessment is a far more difficult issue that is being presently received."⁵⁷ In other words, while the savvy professional educator may understand the difficulties in assessment, those in the main, politicians and the public, do not, and take and turn those abstractions, scores, into indicators of certain realities. In other words the desire to know and draw conclusions often outweighs caution and wisdom and reification, the static capturing of the thing-itself, is supposedly measured, as such words as "outcomes" suggest to us.

In one last example of how assessment is reified in the case of NCLB, the promotion of teacher quality and accountability is seen as a desirable end. In an almost naive realistic sense, one of the main initiatives on the part of many states at the direction of The Department of Education, teacher performance is now being assessed in connection to student test performance. Regardless of parental or community support, regardless of income and such material factors that are considered basic, apart from human agency on the part of a student where engagement finds its source, teachers are being determined as the responsible agent. Linking teacher evaluation directly with student testing ensures a reification that will most likely perpetuate itself in the teachers

⁵⁶ National Public Radio, "Fresh Air" April 28 2011, <http://www.npr.org/2011/04/28/135142895/ravitch-standarized-testing-undermines-teaching> (accessed July 2012).

⁵⁷ National Public Radio, "Fresh Air" April 28 2011.

teaching to the test ensuring good reviews, regardless of whether this testing is indicative of the quality of education we desire for the individual.

While these cases can be argumentative and present complexities of their own, the issue of reification is a dire problem. When concepts or ideas are mis-taken as realities, as things, the effect is already to have closed off other possibilities. But when concepts or larger sets of interpretations are not only reified, but also acted on, the result can be exponential in proportion. In one positive sense, the mere fact we have practitioners who are critically speaking from the front lines attests to the reified forms that come their way. We might appreciate Ravitch's notion that assessment is indeed complex and application is tricky. The same can be said of those concepts we hold. When they are static and taken as such, our tendency is to see that as the answer in spite of problems. If we can attempt to hold an active stance and remain open, then we are more likely to understand the issues or address the problems as they arise.

Concluding Remarks

We have all experienced moments where we could not see or understand an issue, an idea or some effect that was before us. It is usually in reflection that we look back and utter such statements, "I couldn't see it," or "How was I so misguided in my thinking?" These issues can result from family or personal issues that are so close to us, that makes self-diagnosis difficult. Or sometimes, they are very simple problems, such as getting a rejection letter or a grade on a project that was not to our liking. In these cases we are sometimes genuinely surprised at the negative result or what seems like a complete misnomer. What did I miss? Or what possibly did I do wrong? Often we then look for external explanations, blame or accusation to solve our conundrum. But occasionally we

look back and understand that we could not in fact see the issue, the answer or our mistake, simply because we didn't have an adequate understanding. There are moments where we are simply confused due to the inability to make sense of what is before us. This is the experience of Plato's cave.⁵⁸ The moment when the prisoner breaks free of his bindings, turns and sees the source of light in the back of the cave and cannot see that for a better approximation of reality, but insists that the shadows on the wall are more real. This is the moment of reification and its potential undoing that has propelled this inquiry. All too often we look back and realize we lacked the understanding, the conceptual structures that would have provided clearer insight. Reifications, static concepts or interpreted phenomena of the world held us in check, only later to look back to see that we were somehow held captive by our own, bias, prejudices, stereotyping, labeling - many words that indicate static reductions that signify abstractions that have been taken as real: reification. Our minds literally holding concepts static and unable to see things before us, those things others may have been trying to tell us, or simply our inability to understand. I have suggested that these moments of cognitive stasis, our minds are functionally closed.

This was not the issue of closed mindedness that Allan Bloom was concerned with that impelled him to write "The Closing of the American Mind."⁵⁹ Bloom was concerned that a certain sort of relativism was operating under the guise of openness and as such, inhibiting what is crucial in education: good rational judgment. Bloom posed that this more diabolical sense of openness functioned as a closure in distinction to an

⁵⁸ Plato's *Republic*, Grube, 1992.

⁵⁹ See Chapter One.

ideal of openness not unlike how Heidegger understood it or as we have likewise promoted. It was, however, Bloom's attempt to implicate a certain philosophical tradition that included Heidegger as causing this more devious form of openness.

Bloom's critics, however, have been strong in declamatory examples that relativism and its issues have long been present and pervasive, and, according to them, leaving us with the impression that Bloom's fears are more alarmist than well founded.

This issue of what is understood and meant by the terms open and closed mind in its casual everyday use seemed only more remote due to the controversy initiated by Bloom's assertions. Likewise the respondents and critics involved in the ensuing discussion were also from educational venues such as Bloom. Understanding what was meant by openness and its relevance to education seemed apparent. Hare seemingly understood the importance of the issue as he devoted some effort in defending the good version of openness for education. And while Hare's account is positive towards the concept of openness, his discussion of closedness reverts to a reliance on a dispositional account of the subject that manifests in closedness in terms of dogmatism. In all deference to Hare, his work is essential, helpful and well founded. What seemed missing is an account of closedness of mind that was semi-mechanical rather than the emotive volitional element in his dispositional account. Reification is an issue that is ubiquitous and pervasive to the extent that its use is everywhere and as such is a common mistake, such that it is often cited in terms of being a fallacy.⁶⁰ Our attempt to give an account of reification in light of its affecting a cognitive closure, was to give an account of our

⁶⁰ In Chapter Two Mill was cited as having define reification as the naturalistic fallacy.

common experience elicited above, made in the appeal that we have all experienced ourselves “blinded” to certain ideas. The supposition here is that at least some of these experiences are explainable as cognitive closures reified concepts of how things are that inhibit us from seeing better, or otherwise. To this end, it has been argued that reification forms a static closure such that we are in some sense unable to see differing perspectives or even the relevancy of new evidence, simply because our minds are closed in this way.

To this end, this thesis was pursued as a path that had not been attempted in such a specific way of application. To be sure, Marx and his followers, among the many who occasionally use the concept of reification, have done the most comprehensive structural functional analysis of the concept. And though much is owed to this tradition, to my understanding, there has been no application of reification to the performative closure as I have attempted to show. This was showing was intentionally meant to be a phenomenological account beginning with Kant, a significant and pivotal figure, and followed through the continental tradition, in this case best represented by Heidegger. Using both Kant and Heidegger, via a phenomenological account allows us to exploit the cognitive stasis that undergirds the more provocative ethical implications that obscure the mechanics.

To be sure, there is an entire tradition and some notable figures, such as Alfred Schutz and Burke Thomason, Berger and Luckmann who give a “conventional” account of reification and its import. To this end, we wish not to dismiss the contribution from this side. But showing the application and relevancy from the tradition that Bloom initially claims is problematic is a way of clearing some misconceptions by way of also providing new insight to the application of reification in terms of cognitive closures.

Finally and perhaps most importantly, this inquiry has as its aegis the pretense to be a dissertation in the philosophical foundations of education. An explicit, though perhaps not comprehensive, account of how reification would amplify our understanding of a closed mind seemed best-suited a subject for the educational theorist. It seemed to me that those in the field of education, which rely on theory and its practice, are the ones that had most to benefit from such an issue.

Providing some specific ways we can understand reification as it affects the individual, particularly in the educational field, seems extremely appropriate. In my final chapter I have attempted to make some distinctions and show some relevant applications. In summary I tried to show a different way of understanding how close relates to open, rather than in binary states, especially in terms of relativity, these ideas are best thought of as a dynamic mediation. This prompted me to cite some modes or kinds of thinking where reifications are operating. Particularly of note in naive realism we made an Aristotelian distinction between a cognitive holding that is an active engaged stance, over and against a passive and inactive static closure. Finally, I attempted to elucidate some specific instances where reification occurs in educational contexts so that we can be more aware of its manifestation and the way it creates a closure. The essential moment of reification was specified as content reification and refers distinctly to cognitive static closures we have concentrated on. Additionally I examined reification of method, policy, institutions and ideology as larger effects of reification with the hope that for the educator, such closures and their negative effects can be avoided.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adler, M. Reforming Education: *The Opening of the American Mind*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1988.
- Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*. trans. Joe Sachs, Newburyport MA.: Focus Publishing, 2002.
- Arendt, Hanna. *The Human Condition*. Chicago: University Chicago Press, 1958.
- Benen, Steve. “Beck Targets Churches that Embrace ‘Social Justice.’” Washington Monthly: The Political Animal.
http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/archives/individual/2010_03/022774.php
(accessed July 15, 2012).
- Bewes, Timothy. *Reification or The Anxiety of Late Capitalism*. New York: Verso, 2002.
- Bloom, Allan. *The Closing of the American Mind*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987.
- Burger, Peter, L. and Luckmann, Thomas. *The Social Construction of Reality*. New York: Doubleday, 1966.
- Collins German-English, English-German dictionary. London: Collins, 1980.
- Costa, Paul T. Jr. and McCrae, Robert R. *The NEO Personality Inventory –Revised*. 1992
- Cutrofello, Andrew. *Continental Philosophy: A Contemporary Introduction*. New York: Routledge, 2005.
- Davies, Ray. “Lola”, Lola Verses Powerman and the Moneygoround, Part One. RCA Records, released in the UK June 1970.
- Deleuze, Gilles. *Kant’s Critical Philosophy*. Trans. H. Tomlinson and B. Habberjam. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.

- Department of Education. "Teacher Incentive Fund".
<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/teacherincentive/index.html> (accessed July 15, 2012).
- Education Week. "No Child Left Behind". <http://www.edweek.org/ew/issues/no-child-left-behind/> (accessed July 15, 2012).
- Engel, S. Morris. "What is the fallacy of Hypostatization?"
www.chss.montclair.edu/inquiry/summ95/engel.html, (accessed August 2009).
- Fritschler, A. Lee, Mayer, Jeremy D, Smith, Bruce L.R. *Closed Minds? Politics and Ideology in American Universities*. Washington D.C.: Brooking Institution Press, 2008.
- Gardner, Sebastian. *Kant and the Critique of Pure Reason*. London: Routledge, 1999.
- Goldmann, Lucien. *Lukacs and Heidegger*. trans. W. Q. Boelhower. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd, 1977.
- Hare, W. *Open-mindedness and Education*. Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 1979.
- Hare, W. *In Defense of Open-mindedness*. Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 1985.
- Hegel, G.W. 1977. *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. trans. A.V. Miller. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977.
- Heidegger, Martin. 1962. *Being and Time*. trans. Macquarrie and Robinson. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1962.
- Heidegger, Martin. *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, trans. W. McNeill and N. Walker. Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1995.
- Heidegger, Martin. *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*. trans. Richard Taft. Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1990.
- Heidegger, Martin. "Letter on Humanism," *Basic Writings*. trans. F. A. Capuzzi and J. Glenn Gray. San Francisco: Harper and Collins, 1993.
- Heidegger, Martin. "On the Essence of Truth," *Basic Writings*. trans. John Sallis. San Francisco: Harper and Collins, 1993.
- Heidegger, Martin. *On Time and Being*. trans. Joan Stambaugh. New York: Harper and Row, 1972.

- Heidegger, Martin. *Ontology - The Hermeneutics of Facticity*. trans. J. Van Buren. Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1999.
- Heidegger, Martin. "The Origin of the Works of Art", *Basic Writings*. trans. A. Hofstadter. San Francisco: Harper and Collins, 1993.
- Hoffe, Otfried. *Immanuel Kant*. Munchen: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1983.
- Husserl, Edmund. *Cartesian Meditations: an Introduction to Phenomenology*, trans. Dorion Cairns. Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1960.
- Kamen, Robert Mark. Avildsen, John G. *The Karate Kid*, Columbia Pictures. 1984.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Trans. Guyer and Wood. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*. Trans. J. W. Ellington. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1981.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Judgment*. Trans. J. C. Meredith. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964.
- Kant, Immanuel. "Letter to Marcus Herz," February 21, 1772. Correspondence. Trans. A. Zweig. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*. Trans. L. White Beck. New York: Macmillan, 1950.
- Kant, Immanuel. "What is Enlightenment?" <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/kant-what-is.asp>
- Krell, David. "General Introduction: The Question of Being". *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*. New York: HarperCollins, 1993.
- Kuhn, Thomas. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: University Chicago Press, 1996.
- Levine, L. *The Opening of the American Mind: Canons, Culture, and History*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1996.
- Lukacs, Georg. *The History of Class Consciousness*. Trans. Rodney Livingstone. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1923.

- Marcuse, Herbert. *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory*. New York: Humanities Press, 1955.
- Martin, Robert M. *The Philosopher's Dictionary*. Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 1994.
- Marx, Karl. *Capital*. Trans. from the 3d German ed. by Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling. Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1955.
- Marx, Karl. "Productivity of Capital. Productive and Unproductive Labor." <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1861/economic/ch38.htm> (accessed July 2012).
- Marx, Karl and Engels, Frederick. *The German Ideology Part One*, "Introduction to a Critique of Political Economy." New York: International Publishers, 2001.
- Maso, I. *Openness in Research: The Tension Between Self and Other*. Assen, The Netherlands : Van Gorcum, 1995.
- Merriam Webster Dictionary*. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/lethe> (accessed July 2012).
- Metcalf, A. and Game, A. "Significance and Dialogue in Learning and Teaching." *Educational Theory*, Vol. 58. No. 3. University of Illinois, 2008.
- Mill, J.S. *A System of Logic Ratiocinative and Inductive*. Tronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974.
- National Public Radio. [http://www.npr.org/2011/04/28/135142895/ravitch_standardized-testing-undermines-teaching](http://www.npr.org/2011/04/28/135142895/ravitch_standardized-testing_undermines_teaching) (accessed July 2012).
- Nussbaum, M. "Undemocratic Vistas," *The New York Review*, Nov 5, 1987. New York.
- Nussbaum, M. *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1997.
- Oxford English dictionary*. New York : Oxford University Press, 1993.
- OED. Online. <http://dictionary.oed.com.flagship.luc.edu> (accessed July 2012).
- Philips, D.C. "Dealing "Competently with the serious issues of the Day;" How Dewey (and Popper) failed." *Educational Theory*, Vol. 62, No. 2 University of Illinois, 2012.

- Piaget, Jean. *Construction of Reality in the Child*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. 1957.
- Plato, "Meno", trans G.M.A. Grube. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1992.
- Plato. "The Meno." *The Great Books* vol. 7. Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952.
- Rokeach, Milton. *The Open and Closed Mind: Investigations into the Nature of Belief Systems and Personality Systems*, New York: Basic Books Inc. 1960.
- Redding, Paul. *Continental idealism*, New York: Routledge, 2009.
- Shakespeare William. "Hamlet: Prince of Denmark," William Shakespeare: *The Complete Works*. New York: Viking Press, 1977.
- Sheehan, Thomas and Painter, Corinne, "Choosing One's Fate: A Re-Reading of Sein und Zeit sec. 74", *Research in Phenomenology* vol. 29. 1999.
- Simpson, D. P. *Cassell's Latin Dictionary*. New York : Funk & Wagnalls, 1987.
- The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/perception-episprob/>
- Thompson, Burke. *Making Sense of Reification: Alfred Schutz and Constructionist Theory*. New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1982.
- US Government: Department of Education. <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/landing.jhtml> (accessed July 2012).
- Welton, Don. *The New Husserl: A Critical Reader*. Held, Klaus. "Husserl's Phenomenological Method." Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003.

VITA

Mark Rockwell was born and raised on a farm outside of Mt. Pleasant Iowa. Before attending Loyola University Chicago, He attended Moody Bible Institute also located in Chicago IL. At M.B.I. Mark received his Bachelor of Arts in Theology.

Mark started his academic pursuits at Loyola only after starting his career working at the Cudahy Library as its Facilities Manager.

Mark currently resides in Crystal Lake Illinois.

